



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3433 07606514 7

1

2

3

Howe, L
1877



OTHER BOOKS BY DR. HOUGH

THE EYES OF FAITH

THE MAN OF POWER

IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

THE MEN OF THE GOSPELS

THE LURE OF BOOKS

ATHANASIUS: THE HERO

THE THEOLOGY OF A PREACHER

**THE QUEST FOR WONDER, AND OTHER PHIL-
OSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

THE LITTLE OLD LADY

THE CLEAN SWORD

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROTESTANT
REFORMATION**

FLYING OVER LONDON

THE OPINIONS OF JOHN CLEARFIELD

A LITTLE BOOK OF SERMONS

The Inevitable Book

BY
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

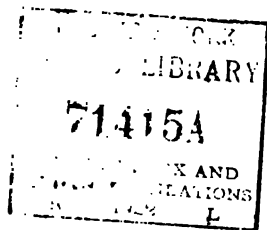


NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

e1922

m 5m -



Copyright, 1922, by
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
71415A

Printed in the United States of America.

TO MY FRIEND
JOHN EDWARD MARTIN

7
X
2
62

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY.....	9
II. "SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT".....	18
III. DOING HIS BIT AT HOME.....	29
IV. "LIKE MEN".....	38
V. TOM TILTON IN AN EMPTY CHURCH..	47
VI. BEHIND THE COUNTER.....	56
VII. THE GREAT GLOOM AND THE SHINING LIGHT.....	66
VIII. THE BREAKING AND THE MAKING OF A HOME.....	81
IX. BEHIND THE PLOW.....	95
X. "HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL".....	106
XI. MARK SNYDER INHERITS THE EARTH..	117
XII. THE HATRED OF BILLY MCKEE.....	130
XIII. THE BATTLE OF SENTABO.....	140
XIV. THE FIRE IN THE HEART OF THE BISHOP	150

I

A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

NORTON BRAINARD was seated comfortably in a chair in his den. He was surrounded by shelves on shelves of books. Even in the most strenuous days of his upward climb he had been a great reader. The furnishings of the room were luxurious enough, but there was a well-bred quiet about them which kept the luxury from offending the fastidious eye.

The hour was late, but Norton Brainard, just in from a dinner of the Chamber of Commerce, was in no mood for sleep. He looked lazily into the fire which he had lighted. It was crackling and chattering in the most friendly sort of fashion. A comfortable complacent sense of well-being stole over Norton Brainard's senses.

The dinner had been given in his honor. For a dozen years the company of which he was president had been bringing increased

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

prosperity to the pushing, bustling city where he lived. To-night the best men of the town—so he called them, and so he felt they were—had united to do him honor.

Judge Swan, with all the genial distinction of his manner, had presided. It was pleasant to remember that finely modulated voice with its friendly urbanity, uttering the words:

“There comes a time when a city needs a man of vision, of skill, and of sternly tested efficiency. There comes a time when a man needs a city, potential in quality, rich in capacity, and loyal in enthusiasm. The man and the city met each other at such a time when Norton Brainard and Adrianapolis began to work together.”

How the men had cheered! A good sort they were. Fellows one could tie to. Together they were making the future of this big town and of the State. Every man of them was like finely tempered steel ready for the strain of his particular task.

It was a long journey Norton Brainard had taken. Twenty-five years ago he had

A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

come to Adrianapolis with no resources but his quick eye, his deft hand, his active brain, and his capacity for loyalty. He had stepped on every round of the ladder. He had been an office boy—missing none of the significance of the office routine. He had been a bookkeeper, never lost in details, but all the while seeing visions of the real significance of the business. He had been a salesman, learning to know the likes and dislikes and the personal qualities of the company's widely scattered constituency. He had been sales manager, conducting such an aggressive campaign that the business had doubled in a year.

He had been general manager, thinking in larger terms, meeting men of bigger caliber, proving himself one of them in quick-moving mind, largeness of grasp, and seizure of opportunity. Then he was made president, and now came those larger activities which step by step had made the business the greatest in the city and one known over the country for its combination of stability with brilliant enterprise.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

Senator Milburn, back from Washington for the dinner, had summed it all up in his gracious and effective way.

"Anywhere in the United States," he had said, "when you mention Adrianapolis, men think of Norton Brainard."

Again in hearty good fellowship his friends had filled the room with a warm, spontaneous burst of applause.

Norton Brainard allowed the memory to play pleasantly through his mind for a moment. Then he arose resolutely. "This will never do," he declared.

With his ready whimsical humor he murmured a bit of a nonsense rime hidden in some crevice of his mind since boyhood.

"The foolish flamingo looked in the glass,
Ah, foolish flamingo!
He fell in love with himself, alas!
Ah, foolish flamingo!"

He stopped by the library table and picked up a book which had arrived that day, a short story by a powerful Russian novelist.

A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

"I'll read a bit before I turn in," he said. Perhaps it was the utter contrast of what he read to the thoughts which had occupied his mind which so captured his attention.

The little book was a story of failure. It was told with the awful simplicity of a great master of words. Every sentence had power in it. Some phrases cut like sharp knives. Some sentences bit like fierce teeth. Some words suddenly summoned a picture of such flitting tender beauty that it brought tears to the eyes.

How the man over there in Russia had tried to win! And how he had been struck down again and again, until at last hope died, and the strange, clammy bitterness of despair laid hold on him.

Norton Brainard put down the book feeling a sort of contraction at his heart. He had known men like that. Out of the past their strange, haunting, hopeless faces arose. He had passed them by. He did not know what had become of them. There had not been time to find out. He had been busy carving his own great career.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

He had struck no foul blows. He had resorted to none of that brutal sharp practice which produces failure for other men in order to produce success for itself. But he had never gone out of his way to give a helping hand to the men who were failing. He had never used any of his abounding triumphant vitality to help them. Somehow their faces seemed ominous and accusing as they stared at him out of the past.

Why had such thoughts never come to him before? A thousand other nights as well as this it seemed might have roused these specters. But somehow that powerful, preoccupied mind had never been open before.

The sudden shock of the meeting, on his own night of supreme recognition, with that Russian story which exploded in his mind like a bomb, had made a way for thoughts which had lain crouching on the edge of consciousness for many a year.

A picture of his mother, with her quick, helpful friendliness, came hurrying into his mind, as if eager to find its place before the

A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

doors were closed again. He remembered her years of ceaseless, gentle, self-forgetful ministry to the whole community.

At her funeral the wise old minister had said, "Life is finer and more beautiful to us all because Mrs. Brainard lived among us. Very often people came to her with heavy loads. When they went away the loads were always lighter."

At the time Norton Brainard thought these words very beautiful. But he had to hurry back to town for a traction deal, and somehow he had not thought very much of them since. Now they had a challenge in them. This was his heritage. This was the family tradition to which he ought to measure up.

Another thought possessed him quickly. He walked across the room and picked up his mother's Bible from a shelf. He held it reverently in his hand.

What a live book it had been to her! How she had used it like a warm garment to wear when days were cold! And how by a strange magic it had wrought new tenderness and

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

love in her, as it sent her forth to deeds of friendly helpfulness!

He opened the book, with his mother's face still before him. His eyes fell on the old Genesis story of Cain and Abel. He read it through feeling as if his mother stood beside him.

One phrase was marked with a distinct and careful line under it: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He could see the fingers making that line so many years ago. It seemed as if the words came straight from his mother to him now.

He picked up the Russian story for a moment. Its title, which he had scarcely noticed when he began to read it, arrested him now. It was called "The Man Who Had No Brother."

A wave of terrible, almost unbearable pity swept over him. What a tragedy life was to men, earnest and true, lacking the last brilliant gift, but ready to work well, if someone helped a little, when in spite of all their readiness they found no one to help!

The haunting faces came out of the past

A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

again. Some of these men had failed because he had not been a brother.

Once more he held his mother's Bible in his hand. Once more he read over the old, old story. And with a strong man's bitter regret he said aloud the words, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

It was a dozen years later when the other dinner was given.

The fame of Norton Brainard's brilliantly successful social experiments had gone all over the United States. The new variety of workmen, with their vigor, their initiative, and their ardent enthusiasm, produced in response to the methods Norton Brainard had introduced, were already becoming a well-known type.

This dinner contained men from many social groups. It was characterized by a splendidly democratic spirit of fraternity.

One able young foreman brought the whole body to its feet when he said, "Norton Brainard is the man who has made Adrianapolis spell brotherhood."

II

“SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT”

GENEVIEVE BURTON woke suddenly. She had not been asleep long. The afternoon had worn into the evening in a sort of dull, heavy quiet. Then as night came on she had sunk into slumber. Something had roused her. Was it the strange wonderful, living thing, so small and so amazing, which lay in the bassinet near her? No, the new arrival had begun to feel at home in the world and was sleeping quietly and breathing regularly. But sounds were coming from somewhere, sounds infinitely sweet and tender and beautiful. They formed themselves into words while she listened:

“Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright;
Round yon virgin mother and Child!
Holy Jesus, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.”

"SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

These were the words, and now Genevieve knew that she was listening to the choir of the church next door. She could picture the hushed, expectant faces in the stately old church. The organ tones rolled out with a sort of rich and all-possessing beauty, and the choir went on singing, the voices blending in a harmony so aspiring that it made you think of mounting wings.

It was Christmas night. The wise and friendly old physician had said with a tender half-whimsical smile, "You are giving a Christmas gift to the world, Genevieve." She had known him since she was a tiny girl. Indeed, he had heard the quick, imperious cry with which she had announced her safe arrival in the world twenty-one years ago. His eyes were serious and very gentle now as he said, "It is a very beautiful thing, Genevieve, to be a Christmas mother." Then he was gone and the strange rush and whirl of things, the palpitating of a thousand new experiences did not seem to leave much room for thought. So the day passed.

To-night, however, Genevieve found her-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

self curiously awake and aware. It seemed as if she heard the music from the adjoining church with an intimate clearness of apprehension unlike any experience which had come to her before. And as she listened she thought quickly and vividly, passing over many experiences and many scenes.

Somehow a summer day, her last year in college, came into her mind. She hardly knew why she should think of it now. She had just won the championship in singles in the long-contested tennis tournament. In that last matching of muscle and brain she knew that she had played brilliantly. It seemed better than her best. Her amazing resourcefulness had quite overwhelmed her last opponent. It was a "love" set. As she threw the racquet down at the end she had said, carelessly, "It would have been more worth while if it had been harder." Sally Finney, whom she had just beaten, had overheard the remark and a flush of hot and angry mortification had come to her face. As she had walked away one of the other girls had put her arm around her saying:

"SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

"Don't mind Genevieve, Sally! She's all skill and brains and no feelings. She has no heart and she doesn't know when she hurts you." The words came quite clearly to Genevieve, who was walking away alone. She had not thought much of them then. She was strong and so sure of herself. But somehow they came to her now.

Her college days had been one succession of intellectual and athletic triumphs, and, of course, her social success had been great. So it was not surprising that when Will Burton came in from Harvard to see his sister, he was eager to meet the most brilliant and fascinating girl in the school. He had an imperious, manly energy and Harvard still tells tales of his prowess on the gridiron. He laid energetic siege to the girl, whose charm not even those who disliked her ever denied. He came like a charging army with banners and shouting and all the explosive energy of a confident attack. And by sheer boldness he won Genevieve. They were married the fall after he graduated from Harvard and she from Wellesley.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

Soon he was fairly engrossed in business. Genevieve heard men speak of his extraordinary resources as a business man. He had had several years of experience before going to college and within a year after graduation he was made sales manager of the concern for which he was working. Busy as he was he always gave Genevieve the feeling that he had time for her, that she was much in his thought. She accepted her happiness, as she had accepted every other good gift, as hers by a sort of divine right.

Her half-unconscious complacency was scarcely disturbed by a remark she overheard one night as she was leaving a gay reception. Will had gone ahead to make some adjustment about the car. Genevieve was walking slowly past a group of women, in the center of which stood Mrs. Samuel Boulton, a woman with an infinitely clever and caustic tongue. When they supposed that Genevieve was out of hearing Mrs. Boulton had said: "I wonder when Will Burton will be disillusioned. He thinks his wife is in love with him. She only loves the good times

"SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

he gives her. She's the most self-centered creature I know."

It was curious how little stinging things like this came out of the past to hurt her to-night.

Again she lived over the last few days. Will had been called away on an errand so important that he could not ignore the summons. He had gone with an anxious face. "Take good care of yourself, my gallant lady," he had said, his face alight with eager devotion, "and I'll be back before the battle comes."

Jane Dowden—good old Jane—was with Genevieve at the time. Jane had graduated from Wellesley the year before her younger friend. She had gone in for social service and had become a trained nurse—quite ignoring the opportunities which came to her through her father's fortune. Jane had always liked Genevieve. The two made a strange pair. But even in the days when Jane was a leader in the Young Women's Christian Association and Genevieve never attended the meetings they were friends.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

"What do you see in her?" a critical teacher had once asked Jane as Genevieve passed by.

"I see the woman she is going to be some day," was Jane's quick reply.

In the last few days it had been an infinite comfort to have Jane's quiet, capable, understanding presence. And it had meant everything to have her near when suddenly and unexpectedly on Christmas Day the great battle had come. How that tiny bit of humanity who would be called William Burton, the second, had seemed to fight his way into the world! There had been such a battle at the gates of life that it seemed that even Genevieve's superb health and strength must almost break under the strain. Then came the quiet of the great achievement and the near, dear presence beside her of the little object already tugging at Genevieve's heart-strings with a power which amazed her. The quiet afternoon followed. Then the evening slumber and the wonderful music from the church near by.

"A Christmas mother," murmured Gene-

"SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

vieve. Then she lay silent for a while. The choir was singing again and Genevieve drank in every word of a wonderful Christmas anthem which was unfamiliar to her.

Then she spoke. "Jane," she called, in a voice so low that its lack of energy surprised her. But in an instant Jane was leaning over her. Genevieve looked up into the plain strong face of her friend.

"Won't you read me some of the Christmas things?" she said, half shyly.

"You mean?" asked Jane, a little puzzled.

Genevieve felt a flush coming to her face. Luckily Jane could not see it, for the lights were not yet turned on.

"I mean some of the Christmas things in the New Testament. You've always gone in for that sort of thing. You'll know where to find them." With that immediate understanding of her friend's mood which always characterized her, Jane moved quickly to a shaded reading lamp and turned on the light. Her own New Testament must have been near, for in a moment she was turning its pages and reading.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

It was an experience to hear Jane read. Her marvelously modulated voice seemed to capture every subtlest meaning of the great old story. First came the annunciation, and Genevieve saw the gentle Hebrew maiden bravely accepting her tragic and glorious privilege. Then came the story of the night when no inn was open, and Genevieve seemed very near to that other mother of long ago. After that she watched the wondering shining-eyed shepherds as they looked abashed and glad upon the wan face of the mother and the tiny form of the Child of Hope. The whole story seemed alive to Genevieve and she went back again to the day when Mary accepted her terrible task with the simply beautiful words: "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word."

Jane stopped reading, turned off the light and for a moment slipped quietly out of the room. That too was like Jane. Genevieve lay staring at the mental picture of that other mother of long ago.

Then as if something had snapped within

"SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

her, as if wonderful doors had suddenly burst open, the great thing happened. Life leaped into such meaning as she had never understood before. Love, self-sacrifice, goodness—all of these seemed like a fiery aureole upon which she gazed through the dark. She flushed in humiliation as she thought of her thoughtless, selfish years. She called herself hard names in her honest scorn. There was a little movement beside her. Then the child went on sleeping. And suddenly the heart of Genevieve was full. She wanted to be worthy of this new vision of life. She wanted to get the meaning of Christmas into her own heart. She wanted—how she wanted—to be the understanding, loyal comrade Will, the father, needed, and the adequate guiding, loving mother of Will, the son. It was at this point that in the darkness she uttered her first real prayer.

.
Some time must have passed. An agitated eager form was standing beside her. With suppressed and hardly controlled excitement a man's voice was saying: "Merry

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

Christmas, you brave mother. Are you sure all is well?"

She pressed a button which flooded the room with light.

"Now," she said, and her eyes were shining like stars, "now you must see your son."

III

DOING HIS BIT AT HOME

A QUICK flutter of excitement had just passed through the store. Richard Slates looked eagerly toward the south entrance. It was filled with people, a flush of quickened interest on their faces, and a thrill of enthusiasm in their voices.

"I saw him just one second, Then somebody shut off my view."

"Hasn't he a face! No wonder the soldiers call him Papa Joffre."

"I don't know anything about the Marne fight. Let me see what I can find over here among the books."

So the voices ran on while the crowd outside thinned as General Joffre and his escort moved down the street. Richard Slates found himself saying, "Yes, Hillaire Belloc's books will give you a good account of the whole Marne campaign—no, madam, *The Hilltop on the Marne* isn't a technical study

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

of the battle. It's just a wonderfully human account of the experience of a woman who lived through it all. Yes, sir, *My Home on the Field of Honor* will tell you just what it meant to live in the pathway of the advancing German army as it moved toward Paris in 1914."

After a little the eager group of people moved away, one by one, and for a little while Richard Slates stood quietly among his books. Always he thought of them as "his books," for he had made this corner of the big department store particularly his own. Richard Slates was forty-eight years of age. It was these forty-eight years which had brought the lines of irritated perplexity to his brow just now. The sound of the military music had died away. But something was beating time riotously in Richard Slates' heart. He wanted to be in this thing. He wanted to be young. He wanted to be just out of college and off for an officers' training camp.

It was no sudden burst of thoughtless enthusiasm with Richard. From his boyhood

DOING HIS BIT AT HOME

he had been a great reader. Reading had taken the place of college and university for him, and years ago had put him in command of this book department. He had been so happy with his books—talking about books and selling them in the daytime and reading them at night—that the years had passed along with strange swiftness.

The little lady in Flatbush who was his loyal wife shared his tastes, and the two boys were growing up with books as a part of their daily bread. Richard Slates was particularly keen about history and biography. He had read widely in modern history, and he was less caught with surprises than most people when the great storm burst in 1914. From the beginning his convictions were clear and unhesitating.

In the hard days of confusing neutrality his heart beat time with the Allies' fight for a free and orderly world. And when that period, which he was beginning to admit was a time of wise waiting, had passed, and the President's April war speech had thrilled the world, no one was filled with a deeper

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

passionate approval than the man in charge of the book department of this metropolitan store.

But something else was going on inside him. He looked with cold hostility at his all too many gray hairs as he shaved in the morning. As he passed by the mirrors in the store he examined with critical eyes his face and his figure from which the sharp and definite lines of youth were all too clearly gone. There was no disguising the fact that he was no longer young. His mind was right. His heart was right. But his body simply didn't possess what his country wanted this spring of mighty meanings—this spring of 1917.

He took a turn impatiently among the shelves of books. Was he always destined to be a spectator—never an actual participant—in this marvelous, vital experience of life? He picked up Lieutenant Coningsby Dawson's *Carry On* as he passed the table on which it lay. A few evenings ago he had parted with some hours of sleep while he lived in France with this true-hearted, quick-seeing, graphic writing young man, who had

DOING HIS BIT AT HOME

found himself so deeply, and sensed the meaning of life so truly as he answered the testing summons. How Richard Slates envied the keen-eyed, strong-limbed young Americans who were throwing off selfishness, and ease, and a thousand stifling encumbrances of their best life, as they rose in glad, stern-hearted chivalry to meet the great demand.

The big old store for which he had such an affection suddenly seemed a cramped and stuffy place. And he himself seemed uselessly old. The sound of a hurdy-gurdy playing the "Marseillaise" on the street outside made his feeling more poignant.

Just at this moment he was interrupted. Somebody's grandmother was standing beside him. That wonderful instinct which had made him so successful a salesman told him at once that it was somebody's grandmother.

He looked at the curiously attractive face, tender with the gentleness of years of loving, and serene with the quiet which comes when many a moral battle has ended in victory—and he marveled at the gentle beauty of it.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

He did not know his own face reflected something of what he saw.

He had spent his life appreciating fine books and fine people, and receiving more from the contagion of it all than he even suspected.

"Will you let me see your Bibles?" the grandmother with the gentle face was saying. "Small Bibles, which will fit into a young man's pocket, with clear type and just as well made as books can be."

She was looking into his face as she spoke and something she saw there made her go on. "My grandson is finishing college this spring. He goes to Madison Barracks to the Officers' Training Camp. I want him to have a little Bible with him—one which won't wear out, well made, well bound, a book he can count on in every way."

She flushed a little with surprise that she had spoken so much. Richard Slaters had made no other reply than a look of friendly understanding as he moved off to find the book which would meet his customer's need.

In a little while he stood beside her again,

DOING HIS BIT AT HOME

taking from small boxes rare little Bibles, firmly bound with that combination of strong durability and quiet, dignified beauty which would appeal to the lover of noble books nobly clothed. He had chosen so carefully that it did not take his customer long to decide. And again something in his air of understanding made her say, "He'll take it to France, I suppose, and I hope he'll take it into his heart too."

Like a gentle fragrance inhaled for a moment she had gone. Richard Slates smiled quietly as he moved about putting the other Bibles away. He was alone again, and he repeated softly the words, "I hope he'll take it into his heart too."

He turned over the pages of a rare little Bible, very much like the one which his customer had taken. He found his eyes resting on a sentence in the book of Proverbs. Perhaps the appearance there of the very word which he had been repeating caught his eye. He read, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

The words had an odd, haunting vitality

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

about them. He said them over again. Then he stopped short. He knew what they were trying to say to him. He read over the whole sentence. He was seeing quite clearly now America's immediate need. Its heart must be kept sound, its motives high and its purposes steady. In the boys who went and in the people who stayed, the heart devoted to freedom, the heart devoted to democracy, the heart devoted to brotherhood, must above all things be kept.

There was subtle comfort in the thought. He might not be able to go to France, but he could keep his heart beating with the brave, high quality which would help keep America strong and steady in the hard days to come. And he could do more than that. Suddenly his book corner in the big store began to have new significance. Suddenly he knew that he was in a place of strategy. The books alive with understanding, the books burning with noble passion for international righteousness and brotherhood, these books he was helping to distribute over the city, and, indeed, out over the land.

DOING HIS BIT AT HOME

With a curious flash of insight he realized that his presence helped to make one corner of the great store a shrine of that patriotism which enlarges the love of country into a love of the big world, where common men must be protected and given a free and growing life, where tyranny must be slain for the sake of humanity. He could do his bit by keeping his own heart, and helping a little to keep the heart of America sound and brave and true.

The last Bible was put away now. Richard Slates heard the sounds of closing doors. Clerks moved quickly to find wraps and hats. The bustle of departure was in the air, and tired out cheery "Good-nights" were heard all about. As he walked toward the subway a fine glow subtly diffused made Richard forget that he was weary. He seemed commissioned to an apostolate. He was going to help to keep the heart of America alive.

IV

"LIKE MEN"

ROB ROLAND was sitting in one of the Y. M. C. A. huts of the cantonment, writing a letter. The graphophone not far from him was sending John McCormack's voice through the room to the tune of "The Long, Long Trail." Two young soldiers by Rob's side were engrossed in a game of checkers. The patter of rain on the roof kept up a quiet, steady accompaniment to all the friendly noise of the busy center which was such a combination of club and home to these soldiers.

Rob had just brought his letter to a close, and affixed his name, when a crisp, clear voice spoke from the platform. It was a voice to which men listened readily, and it had won its way with many people before it had become one of the assets of a particularly efficient Association secretary.

"Come up around the piano, fellows," the

“LIKE MEN”

secretary was saying; “we’re going to have a sing.”

In a moment fifty or sixty sturdy men were gathered about the piano. A lad who knew how to make a piano say all sorts of things had his hand upon the keys. With a few quick movements he sounded a musical challenge which made every fellow want to sing. Then, full-throated and eager, the songs were sung—old, old favorites, and new songs tender as a man’s love for his home. Songs of courage, dashing on like a charge, and songs of faith, reaching out with noble confidence for the hand of God. The men sang them with impartial gusto, and as they sang the benches in the room filled with other men. Some of them listened, and some of them joined in the singing.

Rob Roland sat at his place close to the wall of the room and drank in the music. He had a good voice, but he did not sing that night. Somehow he was in a mood for hearing and for thinking. His mind was far away in other scenes, and the dream of the moment brought up his own personal picture

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

gallery of faces infinitely dear. It was with a little inward start that he heard the secretary speak again:

"That's mighty good singing, men," he said. "And now we are going to have some mighty good speaking. Dr. Parsons, president of Moulton College, is going to talk. He is a parson, but he doesn't speak like one."

The man who rose upon the platform had a body which was almost aggressively strong. The young soldiers who turned sharp eyes upon him instinctively respected his obvious physical power. They gave him a generous round of applause. Rob Roland was sitting not far from the platform. He leaned a little toward the man who was about to speak. He had caught a flash in his eye which made him want to hear the first word.

Dr. Parsons looked straight into the faces of the men for a moment, and then he began to speak. He was telling the story of a baseball game between two rival colleges. He knew how to paint pictures with words, and he knew how to make men see what he saw.

"LIKE MEN"

It was perfectly evident that he himself was enjoying the story he was telling. He seemed to be fairly living in the game which he was describing. Perhaps he had played in some such game in his college days. The boys were all keen about baseball, and this quick-worded description gripped them from the start. Rob Roland, who had been a pitcher in college, did not miss a word. And when the game was won by the almost impossible skill and self-control of the pitcher of the home team he was ready to shout with delight.

It was hard to tell just how it happened. But somehow the speaker made a perfectly easy and natural transition. Now he was not talking about baseball. He was talking about life. And his words had the same swift, vivid quality as when he was speaking of the great American game. His illustrations were direct and wonderfully human. You knew that he had lived, and struggled, and felt the hard strain of the fight.

Into his words there crept a great passion. It was the passion for character. It was the

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

passion for strong, clean manhood. His powerful frame seemed swept by the intensity of his own vision of what a man might make of life as he flung forth the summons of the ideal he had described.

He had known generation after generation of college men. He knew their virtues. He knew their vices. He knew their strength. He knew their weakness. He had stood by many a man in his best hour. He had stood by many a man after his worst hour. He had no illusions. But he had great belief in men. All this was a sort of blazing fire in his speech. The men forgot their surroundings. They forgot each other. Each man was conscious of the realities with which the speaker was dealing. They alone mattered supremely in that hour.

It was not a long speech. Rob Roland caught himself moving from a tense, uncomfortable position into which he had flung himself in the eagerness of his listening. Now Dr. Parsons was describing a man who had done the thing for which he was pleading. In a moment Rob knew that he was

"LIKE MEN"

speaking of the apostle Paul. But it was a new human, tremendous Paul the men met that night. And it was with some words of Paul that the speaker closed. He held a little New Testament in his hand, and from it he read: "Quit you like men; be strong."

The spell was still upon his hearers as he sat down. There was a moment's quiet. Then they gave him such a spontaneous gift of applause as was rarely heard in that hut.

Rob Roland walked alone for an hour that night. The rain had ceased. And out under the far, silent stars he fought a battle. He was one of the men who knew very well the meaning of the thing for which the speaker called. Years of his life had been full of devotion to that Captain of life whose leadership is the greatest thing in all the world. His early memories glowed with the simple beauty of a home where these things were dominant. His young manhood had been strong in the strength of these loyalties. But college had told a different story. First forgetfulness. Then carelessness. Then a life lived quite apart from what had been

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

his polar star. The army had done many things for him. But in all the busy days of training his thoughts had not turned toward religion. Now it faced him, mighty, imperative, with a sort of tremendous military command.

He could hear the words of Paul as the speaker had quoted them ringing in his ears: Be strong. Could he be strong enough for this great thing? Could he take up the old life of loyalty to the Master—a life whose meaning poured in through every avenue of memory? Could he be strong enough, and human enough, to make that life a gift to the comrades he had already learned to love so well?

Suddenly he moved with a swift pang of memory. His mother, who had died while he was in high school, had given him her own New Testament that last day they spent together. It was part of his life then. It seemed passing strange that it could ever have been forgotten in the days which followed. Well, it had not been quite forgotten. He had always carried it, even when

"LIKE MEN"

he did not read it. Now he stopped under an electric light. He drew the little volume from a pocket, where it had been waiting to be read. He turned to the words which the speaker had used to-night. The whole vital energy of that address seemed to be in the words as he read them in their setting: "Stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong."

"Stand fast in the faith." He made a little movement of pain at that. For that was exactly what he had not done. He thought of the great stalwart form of the man who had spoken that night. Now he saw that it was but a symbol of a deeper, more masterful strength. He wanted that strength. Yes, and he would have that strength. For this was the moment when he crossed the great divide.

His head bowed in silence as he walked along. No one heard the prayer he offered, except the invisible Hearer of all prayers. But as he put the little New Testament back in his pocket, he had a feeling of nearness to the mother who had prized it so much. Per-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

haps she too had heard. He threw back his shoulders, and quite unconsciously spoke aloud four words: "Quit you like men."

"Hello, Lord Bobs!" cried his chum from somewhere in the darkness. "What have you been doing?"

"Getting acquainted with myself," replied Rob, laconically.

"Then you've been getting into bad company," laughed back his chum. Rob Roland grinned good-humoredly, and made no reply. He knew that it would take all the rest of his life to say the thing he had promised to say that night. And he knew quite well too that most of the saying would be living. The notes of the bugle sounded just then, and in a few minutes Rob had tumbled into bed. As he slipped off into slumber he caught himself muttering, "Be strong."

V

TOM TILTON IN AN EMPTY CHURCH

OF course the church was not empty after Tom Tilton passed through the door and stood in the aisle. But it seemed entirely empty to him. There was something strange and uncanny about the silence. There was a curious quality about the lines of unoccupied pews. The pulpit had a sort of aggressive emptiness. And altogether Tom Tilton felt uncomfortable and out of place.

He only admitted the feeling for a moment however. Then with a frown and a shrug of his shoulders he set to work. In a moment he was chuckling to himself. His joyous sense of life's incongruities had carried him through many a difficult situation. It came to his rescue now.

The more he thought of it the more absurd it seemed that he, Tom Tilton, adventurer

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

and globe-trotter, who knew every important port in the world, soldier in the Great War, with the guns on the Marne still exploding in his ears, should be duly and properly accredited janitor of this beautiful little country church nestling among the hills of New Jersey. He went on slowly and carefully about the simple tasks involved in making the small auditorium ready for the next Sunday's services.

He had assured the committee that he was quite strong again after his fight with a stubborn wound. They had looked dubious, but had decided to let him have a trial. A returned soldier had certain rights which they were the last men to ignore. He set his teeth for a moment as the old wound spoke out in unmistakable fashion.

"That volcano isn't extinct yet," he muttered, as he went on slowly and steadily working.

The little church had been built with love and art. The morning sun shining through the colored glass of the windows made a mellow, transfigured light all about the

IN AN EMPTY CHURCH

lonely toiler. The very quiet, solemn beauty of it all set going riotous memories of scenes different enough.

Nights in the Far East when the Ten Commandments had no more compulsion than in Kipling's poem came back to him now. In a mood of gayly contradicting his environment he lived over again the hot intensity of those old scenes with the magic of their lawlessness hard upon him. Then something happened. It was like an explosion. He was dazed for a moment. But he knew what it was.

He was in the trenches. It was the middle of the night. He was pressing over the top into No Man's Land. Darkness and light were dancing together. Flashes of light flamed their way across the night sky to be succeeded by flashes of curious gripping darkness. Shells burst, then there were periods of tense nerve-racking quiet.

He was one of a multitude of still, stern-faced men, holding the trenches day and night. Somehow the old, gay, lawless days and nights lost their magic seen against the

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

background of the trenches. Some simple, personal, noble meaning of life seemed to emerge and make demands. And something in the other khaki-clad men made response.

He remembered the night when Kid Martin's life had been snuffed out. The two of them were great chums. Something in the boy's cheery grit and endless jolly self-control had gripped the older man. They had lived together at the grinding tasks of the soldier's life. Over the top they had gone together, each man's courage putting new driving energy into the other.

Then one night in an instant a piece of shrapnel had cut its way into the body of the boy, making a deep and terrible wound. It was evident at once that he had but a few moments to live. Tom Tilton bent over Kid, who was conscious with that curious awareness which sometimes precedes the moment of death. Tom's eyes were full of comradeship and love. But words stuck in his throat. Kid Martin looked up at him with quite unabashed affection.

"Don't you mind, old chap," he said; "it's

IN AN EMPTY CHURCH

been jolly well worth while. And—say, Tom, just think what I'm getting out of it now!" Then his head fell back and he said no more.

What, exactly, he had meant, Tom wondered. He remembered his own amazing minute that day when he was wounded. Every power of his mind and body had been concentrated in that fierce, powerful, overwhelming charge. And right in the tempestuous drive of it, the bullet had found him.

As he fell things had seemed to happen rapidly. It was as if doors opened. It was as if he saw into places he had never known before. It was as if life itself began to whisper its meaning in his ear.

Suddenly he knew that this moment he had declared what he really meant about life. Was this death? If it was, he knew in some deep way that he was glad it was so. He had muddled things up in all sorts of ways. He was happy to fling all there was of him into one offering for a great cause. That willingness set wonderful bells ringing in his

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

life. And then he knew nothing more until he came to consciousness in the hospital where sweet-faced women were nursing him back to life.

Quite mechanically, yet very carefully, Tom Tilton had gone on with his work while these thoughts were making their vivid way through his mind. Now he found himself dusting the desk on the pulpit. His hand was on the Bible. He came to a sense of his surroundings with a sort of mental jolt. Guided by some impulse he did not stop to analyze, he took a handkerchief from his pocket and after carefully wiping the dust from his fingers he opened the big book.

Something in the quiet morning beauty of the room seemed to enter his spirit as he turned the pages gently. Then he found himself reading.

It was the old story of a death long ago on a hillside outside an ancient city. Tom Tilton had begun with the struggle in the darkness of Gethsemane. From the start the narrative held him. He knew that battle. He knew what it meant to face death, to feel

IN AN EMPTY CHURCH

invading terrors, and yet to hold on steadily. He gloried in the strength of that ancient Sufferer. What a soldier he would have made! He gritted his teeth as he read of the hours on the cross. How Tom Tilton would like to have headed a party for the rescue of this lowly Hero of long ago.

Then as he came upon the last moments, when the spirit won its perfect victory, he could almost hear the words, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and those other words of triumph, "It is finished!" He leaned a little heavily, pressed by the strength of his own emotions. Two different feelings held him. The first was a sort of amazing comradeship with that great Sufferer. He too knew what it was to make in his heart the great sacrifice. The other feeling was a sense of difference. That Man who died upon the Cross had felt at home with God. He had called him Father. To him dying had been going home.

Why was it that in a quick rush some of his most lawless deeds in old wild days came up before him? Jesus had died to free the

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

world from these things. Tom Tilton had loved them and lived for them. He had really wanted a good world, and yet he had gone on gayly doing the things which take the heart out of goodness. The cross seemed still before him. That Face of infinite responsive comradeship was looking upon him. That Voice strong to grip a man's heart was saying, "Father, forgive them!"

Then Tom saw everything in a flash of understanding, and forgetting all else he said quite out loud, "Why, he means me!"

The morning sun was still shining in softened fashion through the colored windows of the little church. Tom Tilton, quite unconscious of all that, sank upon his knees. He seemed finding again that half-completed moment in France. There he had learned the meaning of self-giving. Here he was learning to make the good, clean purpose of Jesus Christ his own. The same sense of cutting through to the real which had made the day on the Marne memorable, came to him now.

He set his lips hard. "I've got it at last,"

IN AN EMPTY CHURCH

he muttered, as if he had found something for which all his life had been an unconscious search. Then he rose and began to dust the chairs back of the pulpit desk.

VI

BEHIND THE COUNTER

YES, Mrs. Milligan, I think the color matches perfectly. I will be free in a moment, Mrs. Brown. Father is downstairs just now, Mr. Mains. He will be here at once."

Will Clinton spoke with the old friendly courtesy which had been such an asset to the store in the days before the war.

His months in the training camps and his months in France had left little trace for the eye of the superficial observer. When he laid off the khaki he seemed to lay aside all sorts of other things which belonged to the brave young fighter who had been decorated in France. He was back at home and he had taken up the old life without any sign of hesitation or reluctance.

The little village where he had been born, and where he had lived up to the time of the war, except for the time he had spent in the

BEHIND THE COUNTER

high school in an adjoining town, had welcomed him back with warm heartiness, and then had proceeded to take him for granted. His father's store was the rendezvous for everyone in the village, and soon it seemed as if he had never been away.

All the more was this true because the town had not been with him in France. If sometimes, as he took a bolt of cloth from the shelf, he saw a sudden vision of desperate fighting and bloodshot eyes, the matter-of-fact woman standing in front of the counter never suspected it. If the eyes which were bent on the slip of paper on which he was recording an account of some transaction were really looking out over No Man's Land, or up at the sky where star shells made their way, no one in the village surmised.

The sign in front of the store read, "General Provisions and Supplies." There was even a case of books, novels, travel, adventure, history, and biography, and Will's father used to say that if a customer had to wait, it was because Will was detained in the

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

corner where the books were kept. But few customers had to wait for any such reason. Will was an eager young worker, and always had his eyes open for a sale.

However little his impassive countenance revealed it, this morning found Will Clinton in a state of inner rebellion. His nerves seemed snapping like little firecrackers inside him.

The store seemed shrinking until it had become quite too small for a real man. The questions people asked were unbelievably petty. The village was a toy town which he had outgrown. The whole life was cramped and narrow and dull. He wanted to get out into the big world to be part of big issues.

Will Clinton had no illusions. He knew that he was just an everyday American, a little more thoughtful than some, perhaps, a little more fond of reading than most, it might be. But he had measured himself against other American boys in France, and he knew that he was not at all one of the brilliant sort who could achieve startling success. His very decoration had been won as

BEHIND THE COUNTER

a result of solid self-control rather than because of striking or ingenious courage.

He knew that he belonged to the life of the village, and that there he would do his best. But he was unspeakably restless, and very weary of it all. The war had put something into his blood. And that something wanted away from the ceaseless round of everyday life.

The very things concerning which he and his chum had complained the most in the army seemed now to have a curious glow about them. Not some of the hideous sights of the battlefield—these he wanted to wipe from his memory. But even here the thought of something big and masterful and victorious which emerged in a man when the worst hour came stirred him vaguely. He wished he could find something in this village which corresponded to the greatest hours in France. All the while the routine of work was going on.

"No, Mrs. Bolton, I haven't seen Jimmie this morning. Yes, Mr. Monroe, I think we have just the thing your wife wants. Two

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

"~~Yes, and you say, Miss Meadows?~~ A new ~~assurance~~ has come in this morning, Mr. ~~Townes~~. I will go with you, directly, sir"—~~this is a stranger~~. "The shoes are in the ~~room in the rear.~~"

By and by the trade thinned out a bit. It was nearly noon, and the afternoon would move along slackly enough until about three o'clock. Will went for his hat, walked toward his home in a more or less mechanical fashion, ate his dinner in rather unwonted silence, and then wandered out along the bank of the little river which ran along the edge of the village.

It was evident that he would have to have this thing out with himself, and he might as well do it now. He looked at the wrist-watch which he had worn during the days in camp and at the front. He could have an hour all to himself before he need get at some accounts which must be gone over before the brisk afternoon trade began.

There was an old resort of his under a tree down the river. He dropped into a little boat he had owned for a long time and pad-

BEHIND THE COUNTER

dled toward the spot where he had dreamed many dreams before the war. In a few minutes he was sitting under the big tree on which he had carved his initials with the first knife which he had really owned.

The quiet summer beauty of the scene did not appeal to him to-day. The fever of unrest was having its way with him. He saw himself living his life out and growing old, moving over and over again through the same petty round of work. He trembled a little with repulsion at the very thought.

He could see his father's sturdy form beginning to bend under the strain of hard work. How little life had really given to him! He could see his mother's quiet, capable face, with the hair above it turning gray. How she had been chained to arduous household tasks through all the years!

Suddenly his parents stood before him as dull figures whom life had worn threadbare. He flinched a little at the touch of disloyalty in the thought. But it persisted.

Would he be like that? Were there no doors through which he could go to a life

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

which would be vivid and glowing, in the midst of big events and big people, even if he was only a small part of it all? He moved a little with an unwonted, irritated energy, and gazed out at the winding river with unseeing eyes.

For some minutes he sat so. Then a movement of his hand struck something hard in his pocket. Half automatically he reached for it and held it before his eyes. It was the little khaki Testament which he had carried through all his days in France. In all sorts of scenes he had read it, and these scenes and the thoughts with which he had read the little book came back to him now.

There was one feeling which was always a part of his reading. That was a sharp, loving longing for his home.

He could see his father's face against that stern background of war. In France his father's character had seemed the very thing he was fighting for, the thing full of promise for the future of America, the thing which must be kept alive in the world. He flushed as he remembered that he had been thinking

BEHIND THE COUNTER

of the life which had flowered out in that character as dull and gray.

In France wonderful secrets about his mother had been whispered in his ears while he read his little khaki Testament. Had he forgotten them so soon? In France he had known that she had discovered meaning in life which was hidden from many great leaders and statesmen. Back of her deep eyes he had sensed from afar a wealth and a wonder before which he stood amazed. Women such as she kept the soul alive in the world. How he had wanted to get back, and appreciate her as he had never appreciated her before! Again he flushed as he remembered that he had been thinking of her life just now as the life of a slave to drudgery, with no bright light anywhere.

He opened the little Testament and began to turn over its pages. At length he found himself reading the story of the shepherds in the Gospel of Luke. He had always loved that story, and in fancy now he was with these sturdy men on that night long ago when the sky turned to music, and the black

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

darkness turned to shining angelic presences. He followed them on their journey to the place where a little child lay sleeping. He watched them peering at the baby face. And then he read with almost strained attention these words: "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God." He started with the amazement of it. After a night like that, back to keeping sheep! He saw them at the old tasks. He saw them sitting night after night under a sky which no longer sang, and in a darkness which did not turn into light. He saw them with no singing except the singing in their hearts, and no heavenly presence except the presence of a new sense that God was at work in the world, the presence of a new joyful expectation in the invisible chambers of the soul.

That was the secret then. If you had the song and the light in your heart, you could find glory in life anywhere. His mother had done that. And in his quiet way his father knew something of the meaning of it. What you took to your task was the thing which gave it glory.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

After all, there was such a thing as the transfiguration of a country store. He looked at his watch, and gave a little whistle. Then he swung into the boat and with swift vigorous strokes moved up the stream.

An hour later Will Clinton was standing back of the counter again. Perhaps nobody noticed the deep and glowing light in his eye. But more than one customer did carry away from the store that afternoon something which he had not brought. Noble vitality is contagious, even when we are quite unconscious of the contagion.

"Yes," Will Clinton was saying, "I think dark blue is quite the color you want. I am glad you brought so many eggs, Mrs. Furton. We can use all you can bring. Hello, Tom. Surely I'll come over to-night. No, Mr. Neddleton, that order hasn't come in yet. I think surely it will be here to-morrow."

VII

THE GREAT GLOOM AND THE SHINING LIGHT

THE C. C. C.'s had not met since the United States entered the war. They were a group of brilliant young bloods, many of them newspaper men, and they held pretty much every social and economic view of which the mind of man could conceive. "All except Bourbon opinions," declared Sammy Fisher. "There are no Bourbons here."

No one ever used the full name of the club. The initials seemed to have a connotation of their own. If you inquired what they signified and you chanced to find a member in a communicative mood, he would tell you with a half-wry smile that the full name was Cosmic Combustion Club, and that the meaning of it was that a good many things ought to be burned up, and this particular group of good-natured but fiery radi-

GLOOM AND LIGHT

cals wanted to have a share in the conflagration.

There was no end of good talk at the meetings. And, indeed, sometimes the talk rose to amazing heights of penetration and eloquence. But the war put many discords into the music. From the start there was the sharpest difference of opinion. And opinions somehow ceased to be bubbles you could toss in the air with a sort of pleased æsthetic indifference.

Jimmy Linton was a belligerent pacifist. Martin Mulroe was a pronounced pro-German. Edwin Anton was ready to put his philosophical anarchy to a sterner test than had somehow seemed real in the old days of bright verbal exchange. There was the sort of fundamental cleavage which drives men apart. As the situation became more tense the men began to look at each other with a certain touch of suspicion.

Then the meetings had ceased.

Over two years had passed. Benjamin Carter thought half ruefully of the old days and all the difference the time had made as

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

he walked along in lower Broadway the first day after his return from Europe. He had broken away from the circle early to go to a training camp, and had sailed off to France a second lieutenant. Much chaff he had received from the other men for his untutored middle-class idealism.

"Ben doesn't live on facts. He lives on watchwords," Martin Mulroe had declared with laughing malice, when he bade the group good-by. "Well, go to it, son. Fight the battles of the British Empire and the bloated magnates. It's your funeral, you know."

Ben had his retorts ready. "I've never known a crowd which came nearer to living on watchwords than this one," he flashed back; "and the British navy has been taking care of us so long that I am getting tired of being a dependent. So long, fellows. We'll make the world safe from the Germans first. Then we'll deal with the magnates."

He had managed to speak with light good humor, but his heart had been heavy as he thought of the splendidly sincere group of

GLOOM AND LIGHT

men he was leaving, and of how few of them saw the situation with his eyes.

The officers' training camp had been a busy spot. Ben had belonged to one of the earlier contingents sent to France. He had seen hard fighting, and after the signing of the armistice he had been retained in Europe for long months of the sort of duty which consumes time and yet leaves a man quite uninspired.

While the war lasted his passion had burned at white heat. He swept by every disillusioning aspect of camp life, and all the inevitable, intolerable brutalities of the fighting with an inspired and flaming spirit. But the months after the coming of peace and their world-wide reaction, with their cynicism and their crass selfishness, came like a series of wounds upon his very soul.

As he walked down Broadway he was conscious of a certain moral and spiritual sag. He found himself reverting to a mood of long ago and finding a phrase from the Bible to express his feelings. The clever minister who was his father had taught him many a

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

trick of human relations of things which often seem formal enough.

Now he found himself turning to the Omar Kháyyám of the Old Testament and repeating after him, "All that cometh is vanity."

The war had been that. The peace conference had come to no more than that. The idealism of the President had been futile enough. And all the interactions of confused selfishness which made up the life of the world which had emerged after the fighting gave an added bitterness to the truth of the old Hebrew cynic's words.

At the moment Ben heard someone calling his name.

"Hello, captain, with your pockets full of medals. Let a man feel the grip of your hand."

Ben turned and there was Sammy Fisher bearing down upon him with eyes shining with welcome and a face alight with friendliness. The heart of the young officer warmed and a glow began to move over his whole body.

GLOOM AND LIGHT

"We know all about you," Sammy went on as he pumped his hand as if he had been drawing water from a deep well. "We have watched your promotions. And we know what you did in the Argonne Forest. And the gang is all proud of you—even the Bolsheviks."

Soon the two were chatting with the sort of abandon of boyish friendliness which old intimacies make possible. Then as Sammy reluctantly turned into an office he said:

"The C. C. C.'s are meeting to-night. At the old place. The first meeting since we came to the great divide. Be sure and be there."

Ben promised and moved on to keep an engagement of his, a little song of happiness singing itself in his heart. After all, it was immensely good to be back. And it was good to think of meeting the old gang in the same old way.

Yet it proved to be not quite the same old gang. And it was not in quite the same old way. There were the same faces. A number of men had seen service on this side and

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

in France. Two or three had passed through difficult experiences as conscientious objectors, and one had the marks of a severe time in prison upon his face. There was the heartiest of friendliness. There was a deep and mellow comradeship which the old days had never quite known. But the care-free gladness of that group of young radicals was somehow gone.

"We need you, Ben," said Martin Mulroe. "Most of our dreams have faded in the brutal light of day. If you can still sing, we'll make you our poet and give you the job of singing us back to optimism again."

"Right you are," said Edwin Anton; "I can't even believe in anarchy. Come with your panacea, Ben. Gentlemen, make way for Orpheus."

"Is it a quack doctor or a new Empedocles you want?" laughed Ben in response to the challenge.

"We've had enough of quack doctors," cried Jimmy Linton, "and if I remember my Greek, Empedocles jumped into the crater of *Ætna* when he found himself with-

GLOOM AND LIGHT

out illusions and with nothing to say to the world. We won't have either, please. Give us some of your American-made, simon-pure warranted-not-to-rust idealism. We're a valley of dry bones waiting for Ezekiel."

Ben was never really caught by a difficult situation. He managed to show so much interest in the experiences of the other man and the state of feeling in America that he was not pressed for his own attitude. It was a hard evening in a good many respects. The group of men was amazingly well informed. And it seemed as if every man of them had taken special care to make a collection of hard and sordid facts. It was not merely that they were cynical about any particular social group. They were cynical about every group. All their rainbow gleaming radical hopes seemed to have burst like a soap bubble, leaving a sour taste in their mouths.

Clever as were the methods by which Ben avoided a direct expression of opinion, he did not comfort himself by supposing this his old friends did not understand his silence.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

In fact, as he walked out of the room with Sammy Fisher, he heard Martin Mulroe say softly: "It's hit Ben too. And, by Jove! his silence is worse than anything the rest of us have said. His silence after the way he used to talk."

Ben went to bed that night with the last phrase monotonously repeating itself in his ears: "The way he used to talk." The burning humiliation of it made him flush in the darkness. He found himself clutching his hands together as he thought of the gleaming enthusiasms with which he sailed for France.

What a dull gray world he had come back to! It would be better to be sleeping somewhere in a soldier's grave with his impossible dreams still wrapped about him.

The room seemed singularly close and almost stifling. He rose to open a window. There below the hotel lay the streets of New York which he knew so well. He thought of the nights when he had walked about with other eager dreamers discussing the remaking of the world. How young they had

GLOOM AND LIGHT

been! And how impossible were their dreams!

He flung himself in a chair by the window. He might as well fight this thing out. And it seemed to have taken remorseless hold of his mind. He found himself looking across the Hudson to the lights on the other side. The dark river lay between, moving out to the cold, mysterious sea. Somehow everything he touched to-night seemed edged with gloom.

He found himself thinking of his father, whose superb and self-forgetful life had gone out in an abandon of fine service only a few years before. Had his father ever faced such a disillusioning world as his son was facing to-night?

Suddenly he found himself dimly remembering a conversation with his father on one of those last rare days of comradeship. "I am going to leave Paul with you," the older man had said whimsically. "When my worst minute came Paul gave me the message which kept me from losing hold. When everything gets mixed up, go to Paul. Cut

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

through everything which keeps you from getting at him. And stay with him until he gives you his secret."

Odd it was that his father had said just that. And singular that it should come flashing into his mind just now. Ben turned on an electric light. He felt in a pocket where there was always a little Testament. Settling himself down in an easy chair he began with the book of Acts. Then he ran through the letter to the Christians in Rome, moving very rapidly, for he was looking for the personal touches. He passed quickly too through the letters to the Christians in Corinth, though some tremendous passages seemed fairly to leap from the pages in the night. He felt the trumpet war note in Galatians and quite unconsciously swung along to its own high music.

Then he turned into the letter to the Ephesians. He remembered that his father had quoted from someone the saying that this book was the Alps of the New Testament. He had the time and the situation and the man alive in his imagination now.

GLOOM AND LIGHT

The whole structure of the civilized world was breaking apart in decay. And Paul set out with the audacious purpose of attacking the Roman Empire. All his suffering, all the terrible experiences piled themselves up before Ben's eyes.

The fairly titanic heroism of the man seemed to smite its way into his alert and quickened mind. The mighty outburst of confidence, the far-flung vistas of the hope of the great social organism built about the triumphant Christ thrilled him. He found his fingers moving backward.

Now he was looking at the eighth chapter of Romans. He could see the marks of beatings and stonings upon Paul's body as he read. He could see the strain of misinterpretation and all the hatred of those in the little church who misunderstood him. He could see the marks of the constant pressure of the heavy decaying life of his empire. What a world! What a life! What audacious courage!

And out of all this Paul cried: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword!"

Then came the outburst of faith. Ben's throat choked as he read it. "Nay, in all these things we are conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded," so the stately, majestic words went on piling the mountains of difficulty and terror one above another, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come—"

O, the triumphant virility of that—"nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"!

Back of Paul stood the mighty Master in all the imperial glory of his great renunciation and his immortal victory. No wonder Paul was ready to defy the universe.

Ben found himself walking to and fro in the room with his blood tingling. It was in just this sodden, brutal, disillusioning world that these things had happened. It was in this world that the Master of Paul was yet working to bend dark and terrible evil to the

GLOOM AND LIGHT

purposes of his will and to lead goodness to triumph. And the real man must choose.

Would he be on the side of the heroic hopefulness of Paul—Paul who was hopeful after the world had flung him bleeding to the ground year after year? Would he be on the side of the clear-eyed Christ? And quickly another phrase, this time from Jesus himself, rang in his ear: "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

The young man breathed deeply. He found himself feeling very small and cowardly in the presence of that supreme, virile manhood, of that undiscouraged faith which knows the worst and believes in the best. He saw the meaning of that hope which is as solid as the character of God. He saw the power of that work for brotherhood which moved with the very wheels which turn the stars. He knew that his own choice was made.

"Nor things to come," he repeated, joyously. Then as he flung himself upon his bed he found himself saying, "I'm not afraid of the next meeting of the C. C. C.'s."

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

The boy's dream was gone. But the man's conviction had kept all that had most value in it. And now the gossamer vision had changed to the golden hardness of metal refined in the fire.

VIII

THE BREAKING AND THE MAKING OF A HOME

THE home of Rob Stokes had fallen in pieces about him like a house of cards. He hardly realized how it had happened. But the loneliness and the emptiness of the place which he used to call his home were evident enough.

He sat by the open fireplace. He had kindled no fire there. And there seemed to be a symbolic significance in the cold ashes lying before him where bright embers had so often gleamed.

He could see Jeanette now with the glow of the light playing about her golden hair and her face with a sort of insistent eagerness about it, and a tang of vitality which made one look and look again.

The room was comfortably warm, and the radiator in the corner was simmering a lit-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

tle as some steam escaped. Rob leaned back in his chair wearily.

It was his first evening at home since his wife had gone back to her father and mother, leaving a mass of echoing, vibrating, angry words behind her. She had carried some words of just that sort with her. Very few people had ever gotten the best of Rob in a verbal encounter.

The two of them had grown up together in a town a hundred miles away. But not until they were in high school had Rob and Jeanette shown any particular preference for each other.

They were both keenly athletic, and each admired the skill of the other. Jeanette had played basket ball with a shrewd appreciation of the points of the game which not only won her a unique place among the girls of the school, but also had its own share in winning her a unique place in Rob's heart.

He remembered with a thrill the wonderful days when they played tennis together. With Jeanette as a partner he was ready to face any other boy and girl in the school.

A HOME

He remembered how in one game of doubles in a tournament five games had been won by the two of them against a really skillful pair of opponents. Jeanette had been serving. After her second service he had called out, "Thirty love," and then he had whispered as he passed her, "That's what it is to be always 'Thirty love,' and the set won."

He had never spoken with such blunt honesty before, and Jeanette flushed, bit her lip, and somehow lost the clearness of her eye. Almost more quickly than one can tell about it the score was deuce, and it was only by the most careful playing that the two of them won the game.

"You can't mix love-making and tennis," muttered Rob as he left the court.

But that evening the two of them had a long walk. It was the night before the high-school commencement when they were to graduate. And immediately after Rob was to go to the city near by to take a position which he thought of as an open door to success.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

College had never allured him somehow. It had required all his father's influence to keep him steady and faithful to his work through the high school.

He felt very mature and not at all the young man he was on that night before the high-school commencement. And like many another boy on a beautiful spring evening he told the story which was so very new partly because it was as old as the home-making instinct of the race.

Jeanette had listened with a sturdy sort of independence, but with a gleam in her eye which gave Rob no end of courage. And the picture he painted of a very little home in a very big city was evidently a picture upon which she liked to have her eyes fall.

The big town had proved even bigger than it had seemed from afar. And Rob had proved very much smaller than he had seemed in the little town of his boyhood. But he was not afraid to work. He had a sturdy body and a quick, clear mind.

And so he rapidly made a real place for

A HOME

himself in a business old and established, if not brilliant and dramatic in its activities.

The day came at last when Rob brought Jeanette to the little home in the big city. She was all delight in the new sights and sounds. Perhaps her relish was a little too eager, her desire for more experiences a little hectic. But Rob was full of happiness in the presence of her obvious enjoyment.

His business was engrossing. And the playtime was proving equally full of allurements. He hardly realized at first that you cannot give the last ounce of your vitality to business during the day and use more strength in a constant round of the sort of enjoyment which means tense nerves and late hours and little repose at night.

When he began to be irritable, and short words came with little provocation, he did not at once understand it. Then, being a young man with a clear head and an honest mind, he thought the matter through. He remembered the evening when he spoke of his conclusions to his wife.

"This gait is getting a bit too swift for us,

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

Jean," he said as they sat for a moment together after dinner before going out to some place of amusement. "We ought to spend half of our nights at home and catch up with ourselves. Jeffries told me this morning for the first time that my work wasn't up to the mark. It's these nights. I'm losing my fighting edge."

Jeanette had looked straight at him with a sort of sulking anger in her eyes.

"One might as well be dead if one can't get anything out of life," she said in her decisive way. And then she added, carefully calculating the sting which she put into her words, "and a real man ought to be game at least while he is young."

Rob made no reply. But he also refrained from further suggestions. The words of his wife had struck him like a lash, and his first instinct was, of course, to prove how wrong she was. Matters at the office went better. He made no complaint when his wife had plans for every night. And if dark lines were coming about his eyes, Jeanette gave no indication that she saw them.

A HOME

This little episode had occurred toward the end of the first year of their married life. It was well along in the second year when one night Rob said with a quiet definiteness which he used rarely, but which Jeanette had learned meant that there was no appeal: "I'm not going out to-night. I have played this game to the limit. I've got to choose between play and work. I haven't the money for the play without work, and I don't want it anyway. If you want to keep this thing going you'll have to go with other friends."

Much to his surprise, Jeanette took him at his word. His ultimatum had not proved an ultimatum, after all. And it wounded his vanity and perhaps something deeper than his vanity that she found it so easy to amuse herself without him.

Jeanette was the best of company, and there were always others of their circle ready to call in for her.

"Rob is worshiping his idol of business," she would say with a laugh. "He won't go out to-night." And so with Kate and Jim,

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

or with Elizabeth and Jerry, off she would go.

Rob found himself thinking of the babyless homes of the whole group, sometimes a bit wistfully. When Christmas came, somehow it seemed a little less like Christmas with no patter of small feet and no outburst of small, eager voices.

About this time Rob began to develop a taste for reading. At first it was a matter of the literature of his own business. But the range began to extend. And once when his wife came in very late with little wrinkles of weariness about her eyes she found him engrossed in some book.

"You are too tired to be with me. It's odd you are not too tired to read. Such a bookworm ought to have gone to college," she said, waspishly.

"I wish to heaven I had," Rob replied. And then he flushed as he thought of the implications of his words.

After that there was a state of more or less armed neutrality. And the icy politeness was more wearing on the nerves than down-

A HOME

right disagreement. Then there were weeks when the machinery seemed to move more smoothly, but after the quiet there was sure to come another time of tension. At last came the night when Rob had declared:

"I suppose a husband is necessary to provide the sinews of war. You don't seem to have much use for him beside."

"He isn't necessary for that," Jeanette had flashed back; "you are not my only resource."

Then there were words all edged with lightning, and the next morning Jeanette had left the house where they had spent so many unhappy hours together.

Rob stirred a little in his chair. After all, it was not such an unusual thing for him to be alone in that room. He would get into a book, and lose himself there, as he had done so often before.

But even as he reached for a volume by one of the authors he had learned to love he knew that he could not read to-night. He moved about the room restlessly. And still with a curious insistence pictures of Jeanette

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

in some of the best and happiest times they had known together flashed before his mind.

He found himself idly examining various objects as if he were searching for something. Well he knew that the object of his search could not be found in that room.

Still moving his fingers half mechanically, he found that he was handling a tiny New Testament which lay in a corner of a book-case on one side of the room.

Whimsically he regarded it. Some people thought the secret of life was there. If it was, it must be some secret he had never found. He sat in his chair again listlessly turning the pages.

Then a sentence caught his eye. It was a sentence containing the word "love." That was the thing which he had so muddled. What had the New Testament to say about it?

He found himself reading the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The music of the phrases had a familiar sound, though he had grown up in a home where little was

A HOME

made of the Bible, and had lived a life which made less of the church.

Now, with that insight and sense of vitality which a searching experience sometimes gives, he read the great tribute to love, all alive to its beauty and wonder. It was like a strain of music from the hills of the world. When he had read the chapter once he began to read it again.

He stopped with one clause: "Love never faileth." Somehow the words seemed to be an indictment and a command. His love had failed. It had worn out.

Like a flash of brightness from some region of clearer thought came the insight. He had desired the right things. But he had tried to obtain them, not like a lover, but like a harsh schoolmaster. He had treated the palpitating, sensitive personality of a wonderful woman as an office worker would treat an adding machine.

If love never failed, he must have given Jeanette something less than love, for that adventurous affection which follows on through difficult ways in perpetual hope had

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

not been his. He might have been loyal to his own sense of duty without being disloyal to the chivalry of love.

Jeanette was received at home with very hearty affection. Nobody made the situation hard for her. Everyone was tenderly thoughtful. But in some subtle way she realized that it would be hard to find a place in the old house which would seem natural or normal.

Her sister who lived next door came in often. And her wonderful baby crowed and cooed in her arms as she talked.

Jeanette would keep that baby when her sister had gone and would look long and deeply into its tiny transparent and yet inscrutable eyes. Somehow the small fingers of that little child seemed more wonderful than any of the pleasures she had left behind in the great city.

The Sunday before Christmas she went with the family to the old pew in the old church, and heard the kind old minister preach. His text that day was "Of such is

A HOME

the kingdom of heaven." He began with the Christ-child and then he spoke in his mellow, wise way of the place of little children in the world. Somehow Jeanette knew that her heart was very empty as she listened. And then she thought of Rob, and, curiously enough, of a little baby who looked very much like him. She was silent when she walked home beside her father, and very silent for the rest of the day.

That night the whistle of the express from the city seemed to have something personal about it. Jeanette repressed a little feeling of anticipation. She had never known a young fellow with a stronger will than Rob, and he had spoken the kind of words a man does not use often on the night before she left the great busy town.

Yet she was listening. And surely there was the sound of a step outside, and the sound of the ringing of a bell—

The two sat very quietly in the old-fashioned parlor after their talk that night.

"We didn't know how to build a home, did we?" said Rob, and then, without wait-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

ing for an answer, "but I think we do know now."

.
It was three years later, when the Christmas decorations were hanging everywhere. One little home, a particularly artistic little home if you had an eye for such things, was nestling very happily in its own bit of a pleasant suburb.

Rob was a little late that night. His arms were full of packages. As he swung around the corner a curtain was drawn aside and he saw two faces watching for him. Jeanette held little Rob very close to the glass, and that small person waved a tiny hand. Rob the elder, much more familiar now than he had been with a certain book, was speaking softly to himself, while he waved his hand happily.

If you had been near enough to him you might have heard his words. His eyes never left the window and the face of the mother and the face of the child as he said, "A little child shall lead them."

IX

BEHIND THE PLOW

PHILLIP JORDON first met Jane Caxton when he was attending the agricultural college of one of the big State universities of the Middle West.

Phil had always lived on his father's farm. He had finished the county high school, and had come on for technical training at the school, which was turning the shrewd practical farmers of his State into a group of trained scientific agriculturists.

The life out of which Phillip had come was plain and direct, and he had small notion of the more graceful social amenities. He looked every inch the boy off the farm when he arrived at the largest school in his State.

One day he was passing a group of girls who carried themselves with a gay and easy assurance which quite amazed him, and whose gowns seemed to his unpracticed eye marvels of elegance. As he walked by the group he heard one of the girls say with an

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

unmistakable accent of personal reference:

"Where in the world do you suppose *that* comes from?"

He could feel a hot flush mounting to his cheeks. But at the instant another voice made itself audible:

"He has a good head, at any rate. There are a number of fine suits of clothes going about this campus with no head to speak of protruding from their top."

The girls all laughed at that, and Phil Jordon felt curiously comforted. He had made the discovery that sharp tongues could be used for a fellow as well as against him. It was a discovery which he never forgot.

A few days later, at a reception given by the Christian Associations of the institution, he met a young woman whose voice sounded oddly familiar. He had a wonderfully retentive memory for the quality of all sorts of sounds, and in a moment he had connected the voice with the girl who had found something to say for a boy fresh from the farm.

She was a very friendly, human sort of a

BEHIND THE PLOW

person, in spite of her clever tongue and the obvious marks of surroundings such as the newly arrived freshman had never known. She seemed interested in getting him to talk. Phillip had plenty of ideas, and when his mind once got into action, and he forgot his self-consciousness, his tongue moved readily. At the end of the evening he almost felt that he had found a new friend.

The weeks and months and years passed rapidly enough. Athletic prowess came naturally to the hardy lad who had captured the sturdy energy of the sunshine and good air and actual work of the life on the farm.

All sorts of doors opened. The swinging, zestful life of the big old school ere long contained nothing which was not open to Phil Jordon. He did faithful, constant work in his classes and his solid character and the poise of his bearing made him a man depended upon everywhere. All the school honors which are good for man came his way, and his university life was full of the pleasures of vigorous and successful activity.

The evening before the commencement at

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

which he was to graduate, he was sitting on the steps of one of the girls' fraternity houses. Jane Caxton was sitting just above him. She had graduated from the college of liberal arts the year before, and was back at her chapter house for a commencement visit.

A good many friendly letters had been exchanged by the two during the year, but somehow Jane seemed rather elusive, and Phil had some disconcerting doubts about her answer to the question he intended to ask that night. He had planned on a quiet walk later on in the evening. But the piazza at the head of the steps where they sat was entirely deserted, and in a sudden flash of decision he turned to Jane.

"My father has given me a little farm as a graduation present," he began.

"I'm afraid life is being made too easy for you," she flashed back.

Phil smiled a bit whimsically at that.

"Anyhow, I want you to make it still easier for me," he said with a masterful grin.

"I want you to live on that farm."

Jane looked down straight into his eyes

BEHIND THE PLOW

for many long seconds. She seemed to be seeking out and reading a thousand things which he had not said. A certain edge of tension cut its way into the silence and then Phil spoke again:

"It's a lot easier to talk about what I want than about what I will give. But all there is of me belongs to you."

Jane straightened a little where she sat, but she seemed to bend a trifle toward him.

"All right, Phil," she said; "I'll do it."

At that moment Phillip was sorry that they were seated on the step of a front piazza, with people passing by all the while. He managed to behave with dignity, but his eyes had a dangerous light in them. Jane felt the passionate intensity of them, and their masterful ownership. If Phil had enough hot blood to make life interesting, he had also enough stable self-control to make life sure. She felt curiously safe as she sat above him on the steps of the sorority house where she had spent so many happy days.

.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

Two years later Phil was moving behind the plow with easy certain stride one fine spring morning. He was thinking of a dozen things. He was thinking of the most ingratiating baby that had ever wandered from fairyland into a human home. He was thinking of a brilliant, loyal girl whom motherhood had transfigured into a sort of mystical madonna.

She was a very practical madonna, however, as the baby could have testified had it been able to talk, and as Phillip could testify, being entirely able to talk. In fact, before leaving the house that morning he had testified, before all the invisible friendly angels who love to visit happy human homes, that his wife was—well, all that she was. What the angels thought of the scene he had no way of finding out. But his wife had flushed with gay happiness as she said:

“Now, you flattering rogue, don’t interfere with my work, and don’t forget that a perfectly good plow and two perfectly fit horses are waiting for you.”

Phil was whistling as he went about the

BEHIND THE PLOW

furrow. After a while he ceased to whistle. It was only a little thing. Perhaps it was nothing at all.

But the direct and candid nature of the young farmer knew nothing of deception, least of all of self-deception. He would draw out something which was coiling in his heart, and see what it was and where it came from. With the surest precision he went on with his plowing while he went on with his thoughts. The thing which he uncovered was a curious restlessness which had been coming over him every once in a while, and which he was quite at a loss to understand.

What did he want that he did not have? He could think of nothing. He was quite convinced that he had the best wife in the world. He knew beyond the peradventure of a doubt that he had the finest baby in the world. He quietly admitted to himself that his farm was made up of as good land as there was in the State. And he knew that it was pointed out as an example of what could be done by means of modern scientific farming. What did he want?

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

Again he asked the question, and for a while it seemed as if there were no answer.

He began to go over his life ever since that day twelve years ago when his mother had died. He could see her now sitting quietly by the fireplace when the evening work was done, reading a little Bible which she had always kept within reach. He remembered one night when she had taught him the text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He could see the tender, serious light in her eyes as she had told him what all the words meant.

The furrow turned at this moment. Phil deftly guided the horses and skillfully adjusted the plow.

Then he stopped suddenly, much to the surprise of the faithful beasts ahead. They were not accustomed to attacks of temperament on the part of their master.

He stood there looking right into vacant space. But he was seeing intensely and vividly all the while. He was seeing the boy who had allowed his mother's faith to slip

BEHIND THE PLOW

from him as if it had never been. How had it happened?

That question he could answer quickly enough. His father was one of those honest, dependable, secular men, who fall into the way of letting their wives represent them in all matters of religion. He had never opposed his wife. He had felt a vague reverence for her piety, but it had always seemed something foreign, something outside the range of his own life and interest.

Phil, the growing boy, had tremendously admired his sturdy father and he had easily fallen into his ways. He had accepted his father's fine code of morals. He had accepted his indifference to religion. The old texts which his mother had taught him had lain sleeping in his memory for many a year. Now one of them had awakened like a child in the night and was loudly crying in his ears.

Long before this, Phil had gone on with his plowing. He was too good a farmer to be halted for more than a moment from his work by even the most critically important

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

thoughts. So together the thinking and the plowing went on.

He thought of some of the men he had known in the university who had gone in for things religious. There was one pastor of a student church who was a prince of a man. Phil had always admired him from a distance. To-day he admitted a half unconscious sense that this virile young minister possessed some fine secret of living which he did not share.

He repeated over to himself the words of the old text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God—"

Well, he had sought all the other things. He had found them. And still there was an empty place in his life. Some men knew the restlessness of failure. He knew the restlessness of success.

On around the furrow he moved with resilient step and firm grasp upon the handles of the plow. He was good to look upon in all his abounding health and clean and well-kept manhood. And the deep, serious light in his eye was the best thing about

BEHIND THE PLOW

the picture, had an observer been there to see.

The work of the morning was almost completed, and it was almost time for the sound of the dinner bell, when Phillip Jordon drew a deep breath. Then he spoke aloud, surprising his horses for a second time that day.

"All right," he said, "I'll do it."

Then it came to him that he had used the very same words uttered by his wife on a certain memorable night about two years before. He smiled happily at the thought. And just then there sounded the clear summoning note of the dinner bell.

.
On a fine Sunday morning not many days later the minister of a certain finely efficient church in the open country baptized a wonderful baby, and received into membership in his church Phillip Jordon and Jane Jordon, the baby's parents.

And this is how it came about that on the morning which followed there was no interruption to the whistling of Phillip as he followed the plow.

X

“HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL”

THE three of us were sitting in front of the camp fire. The big black mountains all about us seemed not at all unfriendly in the mellow quiet of the summer evening.

After the fine day of sport we were weary, but the chatter of the fire suggested talk. Very idly we had moved from one theme to another, until Fenton, the lawyer, made some chance remark, with the bite of a good deal of sarcasm in it, about the sentimentality and general futility of the people who work among criminals.

From where I sat I saw a flash of fire in Tom Rogers' eye. Tom is one of the best reporters on a big metropolitan daily. He thinks he is a cynic, but if you are discerning it doesn't take you long to find the poet and friend of men under the surface of his phrases of brilliant disillusionment. He is

"HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL"

at home with all sorts of people, and when he lets a tale flash forth warm from his varied experience of men, it is always worth hearing.

He was looking at Fenton now with a sort of friendly hostility. "I know an old yegg who would say you ought to make exceptions," he said in a voice with a ring of challenge in it.

"O, no doubt your yegg enjoys a fine juicy victim. He doesn't trouble me. He proves my case."

Tom Rogers leaned forward a little and looked steadily into the fire. There was something a trifle tantalizing in that long gaze and the look of assurance on his face.

"Well, tell us what you see," cried Fenton at last, half impatiently.

Rogers laughed suddenly. "You've seen yeggs in the courtroom, but, after all, how little you know about them!" he said. "They're a mighty cool, independent lot. They keep you miles away. You can't patronize them. But if ever you get the friendship of a yegg, it's yours to the finish.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

A yegg isn't a confidence man, full of oily palaver. He's the proud old aristocrat of the underworld."

Fenton at once scented a yarn, and with his love of a tale the good humor came back to his face. He took an easy position in front of the fire, and then said in a tone of comradely interest, "All right, tell us about him."

Tom Rogers had drawn back a little from the fire. He was looking up at one of the dark peaks above us as he began.

"I can't really tell you about Denver Pete. You'd have to see him. You would have to hear him talk, words that cut as if they'd been sharpened on a whetstone. You would have to see the greyhound body of him—all lithe, strong muscles, and quick power.

"I met him first in a penitentiary where he was doing his seventh bit," he said. "Then for some years I didn't run across him."

Rogers sat in a sort of reminiscent quiet for a while. Then with a curious chuckle he said:

"When I saw him again he was marching

"HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL"

down a street in Kansas City, wearing the uniform of the Salvation Army. If I'd seen a tiger conducting Lenten service in a High Episcopal Church I wouldn't have been more surprised. Denver Peter had a name all through the jungles for a cool courage which fairly took your breath away. He was as hard as flint. Just to look at him made you think of a gun. But it never made you think of a Bible.

"I fell in after the Salvationists as they marched toward their hall. Most of the fellows looked like human jellyfish. It wasn't a very impressive procession. But Denver Pete was different. You felt a hard strength about him as he walked along. You felt a terrible sincerity which gripped you as you looked at the man's face.

"When we got to the hall several men spoke. They left me cold. Then Denver Pete got up. Everybody in the hall sat straighter. It wasn't a speech. It was a discharge of muskets.

"And then all of a sudden the steel strength of it changed, and Denver Pete's

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

face had a look in it that dazzled me. I looked away. I didn't know a man could care so much for other men. And then as he talked, quick as a flash he had me thinking of a Man we never talk much about in our office. He seemed to bring him right there to that dingy Salvation Army hall."

Tom got up to put a new log on the fire. Then he continued.

"I knew from that minute that it was an all-right, sure-thing transformation. But I investigated. Pete had a job that didn't pay much, but it kept him alive and fed and clothed. For two years he'd been living a straight, honest life. Nobody quite understood him. But everybody respected him. And there were people about that Salvation Army hall who would have given their lives for him.

"After the meeting I waited until the crowd had thinned out and then got with Pete. He recognized me right off, and gave me a grip that had a man back of it. I had my way; and we walked out to a quiet restaurant where we talked. We sat by the

"HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL"

table in a secluded corner a long time that night, and little by little Pete told me the whole story.

"It seems it was all because of a new chaplain. The penitentiary—Pete called it the 'stir'—where he did his last bit, was a villainous, Middle-Age sort of institution with a good many atrocities perpetrated back of its stone walls. The old chaplain had been a cynic who had despised the men.

"The new chaplain was a cub just out of college. He never seemed to know that he was in a prison, and treated the boys with a friendly respect which had them guessing. At first they thought it was a bluff. But he played such a square game that they capitulated one by one. Denver Pete held out against him. He'd never had any use for sky pilots, and he would have nothing to do with this one. There was sure to be a yellow streak somewhere.

"One day James Newcomb, that was the new chaplain's name, stopped before the old yegg's cell. 'Pete,' he said, 'you don't like me, and you don't want me around. That's

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

all right. I'm not coming where I'm not wanted. But if you ever do want me, Pete, just remember that I'm on the job.'

"He looked Pete straight in the eyes when he spoke, and then walked right away without waiting for a reply. It jarred Pete a little, but still he didn't show any friendliness to the chaplain. Most of the fellows were talking about the church services and the ginger the cub chaplain put into his talks. But Pete wouldn't go to hear him.

"Then came the day when the big guard, Tompkinson, tried to do up little Davy Flaherty, a boy who didn't have all his wits with him. Davy had misunderstood something the guard said and did the wrong thing. Tompkinson gave him a blow that knocked him down, and was about to kick him as he lay flat.

"There was a bad light in Denver Pete's eye, and nobody knows what trouble he might have made for himself, but just then something happened.

"A voice with the cut of a sword in it spoke out, 'Tompkinson, let that boy up.'

"HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL"

"Nobody had ever called Tompkinson to time before. He turned with fury in his eye. There stood the little chaplain.

"The sight was too much for the guard. With an oath he told the chaplain to attend to his own affairs and turned to settle with Davy Flaherty, who had half risen. He drew back his arm to deal a blow which would flatten out little Davy.

"In an instant the little chaplain was in action and a stinging blow sent Tompkinson reeling. Newcomb had been an athlete in college, it seems, and it didn't take him long to knock the wind out of the big guard.

"That night Tompkinson was discharged. After that the fellows would have eaten out of the hand of the little chaplain. Even Denver Peter relented, and the next Sunday, for the first time in many a year, sat in the prison chapel.

"I wish you could hear Pete's description of that service. It seems the chaplain had known some crooks pretty well before he came to this prison, and somehow got the hang of their vernacular. He was all the

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

while using words which made the fellows sit right up in their seats. And somehow he had caught the crooks' way of looking at things. 'He talks our talk and he understands us,' one young dip had said.

"Well, he was talking this Sunday about Peter. He didn't call him 'The disciple who denied his Lord!' He began by saying that his subject was 'the man who went back on his pal!' The boys knew what that meant. He had struck the one big article in the code of morals of the underworld.

"He made the men see that great human man's friend. Every man of them felt he'd like to have a pal like that. Then he made them see the big-hearted, weak-willed Peter, the man you couldn't tie to because you couldn't tell where to find him.

"Newcomb was great on painting pictures with words. When it came to the trial of Jesus, and the friend he had lived with and trusted turning yellow, the men were leaning forward in their seats, and clenching their fists.

"The minister held a little Testament in

"HE WENT BACK ON HIS PAL"

his hand, and as his wonderful magnetic voice read the story of the cursing Peter, and the strong, quiet Man who looked at him—one long revealing look that pierced his soul—you could fairly hear the men breathing.

"The cub preacher leaned over the desk with a swift eagerness. 'He's been treated like that,' he cried, 'right through the ages. Men have been willing to take everything from him and give nothing in return. But he's never given it up. He's here to-day looking for a pal who won't go back on him.'

"Denver Pete says he don't know how it happened. But right there something snapped inside him. Right there he said, 'All right, if you'll take me I'll be the man.' He says he's been up against some queer things. But nothing like that. Everything seemed jerked about and put in new places inside him. And right then a new man began to live in a new world."

Tom leaned back and sat looking into the red embers. We were all quiet enough for a while. Something as big and real as the

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

mountains, and much more human seemed to fill our thoughts.

At last Fenton rose. He spoke quizzically. But he could not hide the seriousness which mingled with the friendly banter in his voice as he said:

“If the meeting’s over we’d better sing the doxology and be dismissed.”

XI

MARK SNYDER INHERITS THE EARTH

MARK SNYDER had been both a "grind" and an athlete in college. He had a brilliant career in theological school and won a fellowship which gave him a year of study in one of the great universities of the Old World. He came back with the habits of mind of a disciplined scholar, with at least the beginnings of technical attainment, and tastes of a young man of letters whose mind had already partaken of some of the rarest offerings of the literature of the world. He had a gift for telling phrases and sometimes he coined a sentence where every word seemed to be tipped with fire. He had a pleasant and masterful presence. And his easily modulated voice rose and fell in ready response to his mood.

From the interesting village where he began his ministry he was ere long called to

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

a powerful pulpit in a city which dominated the religious life of one of our American States. Success had come easily and he carried it like the well-made and gracious chap he was. He had a gift for a wise and dignified sort of publicity and a certain skill in organization. And so it came to pass that his church was a center of throbbing activity. And his services were attended by a host of genuinely interested people.

Martin Van Pelt and John Knowles were discussing their minister one day. Martin was a wise old physician who seemed part of the family tree in many a home. John was the sales manager of a business which had long ago passed the experimental stage.

"He is every inch a man," said Knowles. "And he has put this church on the map. He has sold religion to more people than any other man in the State."

Dr. Van Pelt smiled a little whimsically. "We all translate success into our own vernacular, don't we?" he asked. "I do think he is a keen diagnostician, and he has the secret of wise prescription. Just the same

MARK SNYDER INHERITS

sometimes he reminds me of the altar of Elijah before the fire from heaven fell."

There was a little bewilderment in the face of Knowles as he looked upon his friend at the close of this speech. But they had reached the door of the church and there was no more time for conversation.

It was a day early in the fall with a certain cool crispness in the air. And it was good to look at the auditorium of the church already comfortably filled with people although it was five minutes before the time for the service to begin. Every seat would be taken before the minister had announced his text.

The church itself was a good place in which to find oneself on a Sunday morning. There was a quiet and yet warm and friendly beauty about its decorations. The great windows seemed telling the secrets of the white light as they turned it to gently glowing colors full of a wistful tender beauty.

The organ was playing. And it was clear that the hands on the keys knew how to gather the varied thoughts and moods of men and women into the unity of a serene

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

and expectant waiting in the house of worship.

You did not notice the moment when the minister quietly entered the pulpit. But when the music ceased the voice which announced the hymn seemed to belong to the place and the stately quiet after the exquisitely aspiring sound.

There was sincerity in the petitions of the morning prayer and its very phrases caught and held the mind and the conscience of the worshippers. The anthems were lifted from the treasure house of the world's best music of the spirit. And the voices of the choir had a restrained and nobly disciplined beauty.

The sermon began in simple and straightforward fashion. And it mounted steadily in form of expression and in gripping power. Men felt the summons and the allurements of the ideals of Jesus as the preacher spoke. And one could feel that young men and young women were committing themselves to those principles of living which the minister described with a deep compulsion.

MARK SNYDER INHERITS

John Knowles and Martin Van Pelt found themselves walking out of the church together. When they had gotten beyond the reach of the ears of their friends Knowles turned to the physician a little impatiently.

"I don't get you, Doctor," he said. "What could have been better than that sermon? I think we are happier than we know to have such a minister."

"You are more than right about the happiness," replied Van Pelt cordially. "Mark Snyder is clean as a hound's tooth. He is true as steel. He's a good man to have young men know. But he irritates me a little sometimes. He gives me such a sense of unreleased power. If the golden moment comes he'll do something to this town. And maybe to a good-sized bit of the world outside of it."

Knowles was restored to good humor by the friendly tribute.

"All right, I'll be on hand to see it done," he said. "But the minister's good enough for me just as he is."

Mark Snyder was sitting alone in his

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

study one night. There was a ring of the bell. He listened to a brief message and then settled himself to wait for the visitor who was to be shown up.

He was poorly clad, this man who had come so late in the evening to see the minister. But he carried himself with a little air that was as revealing as it was unconscious. His eyes were a bit hard. But at the moment the hardness was almost lost in the sense of a poignant tenseness of feeling. Snyder motioned him to a seat and waited for him to speak.

"Probably you can do nothing for me," began the man. "I don't need money. At least I don't need it yet. And I don't need ideas. I have ideas to burn. All I need is character. Do you keep such a commodity about your church?"

Mark Snyder looked at the stranger with quickened interest. The man seemed to fancy that his rather threadbare garments had caught the eye of the minister.

"This doesn't look very promising, does it?" he asked. "I didn't mean that I am car-

MARK SNYDER INHERITS

rying success about in my pockets when I said I didn't need money. I only meant that I have a place to live, and my board bill is paid. And I have work of a sort."

There was something magnetic about this stranger. Mark Snyder leaned toward him.

"Tell me about yourself," he said in a tone which had won the confidence of many a man in the past.

"I'll tell you all I fancy you need to know," replied the late visitor, "and I'll not clutter up the story with unnecessary detail. Gray is my name. I finished college six years ago. I graduated from the Harvard Law after that. I have no complaint about my opportunities. If I have only a poor clerkship now, it's my own fault—and the fault of a little bottle which it is still possible to carry in this land of prohibition."

Mark Snyder waited quietly. It was the right sort of quiet, with no silent emphasis on the confession which the young man before him had just made. The stranger hesitated a moment and then went on:

"I attended your church Sunday morn-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

ing. Something there made me want to come to see you. And something there made me want not to come. You won't misunderstand me, will you? I'm just trying to tell you what you need to know. You seemed to be absolutely the man I would like to be in your grip on yourself and in your easy power of mind. And I wanted to come and ask you the secret. But somehow I felt as if you had never had a fight like mine, and probably you would not know what it was all about."

Gray came to a full stop, now obviously fearing that he had gone too far. In an instant the minister put him at his ease.

"I like you to talk frankly," he said, "and you have told me just what I need to know."

Mark Snyder looked right into the eyes of the man before him for a moment. Then he spoke earnestly and slowly.

"After all, the question is not about just what I have gone through, is it? The important matter is just the other question as to whether I know where you can get help, and I do."

MARK SNYDER INHERITS

The last words were spoken with a certain grave and deep assurance.

The stranger found himself listening with unaffected interest as the minister talked to him of that Other Young Man, who, with every current of life moving with passionate intensity, had been stronger than his own desires.

"You see, it is a thing I can only suggest," said Mark Snyder. "You must make the great adventure yourself. But you can get acquainted with Him. And He will help you."

Only a few more words were said. The stranger went away knowing that he would return, and that there would be a warm welcome waiting for him. And there was something in his eye which suggested that he was going to make the experiment.

Mark Snyder sat alone by the shaded lamp in his study. There was a little frown on his face and an anxious look in his eye. The words of his visitor had cut deeper than that visitor knew.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

So this was the impression he made upon an unprejudiced visitor, on a man who had the insight of personal struggle and personal need. He went over the years of his happy and well-ordered life.

In a new way he applied all his powers of keen analysis to himself. And his frown grew deeper as the work proceeded. By and by the evidence was all considered and the verdict was ready. "Every bit of my life has been superficial," he said, bitterly.

He picked up his New Testament half idly, and began turning its pages. By and by his eyes fell on the words of the Master: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." He read the words with an odd fascination as if he had never read them before.

So this was the thing he had never done. He had been earnest. He had been industrious. He had been friendly and eager with other people. But he had never allowed the desire for goodness to become a consuming passion which swept through his life like a mighty gale.

MARK SNYDER INHERITS

He had been contented with a life which had avoided the grosser pitfalls. And he had flinched unconsciously in the presence of the deeper demand. He saw quite clearly now that the depth which he lacked did not require some terrible experience of indulgence and rescue. It did require a sort of daring struggle which would allow the sense of the perfect purity of God to possess his soul and shatter every complacency and drive him to a new quest for the upholding strength of the Almighty.

So could a man find a humility as deep as that of any other man who had seen the stain of a dark vice washed from his life. So could he find the scars of honest struggle. So would he find the vital peace which comes after the consuming strife. He repeated to himself softly the words, "They which hunger and thirst after righteousness." He must care like that.

The tale of the struggle of a human spirit slips away between the syllables of the words in which you try to tell it. And perhaps it is better not to try at all to describe the bat-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

bles of the tense and difficult days through which Mark Snyder now passed.

There was much temptation to go back just because there was no obvious and external pressure upon his conscience. And the way of introspection, with all its remorseless revelation of unsuspected selfishness and of the incapacity of the preoccupied mind, involved a hard honesty and a remorseless surgery.

But Mark Snyder persisted. Soon he found that prayer possessed a new quality of reality. And the day came when his whole spirit was alive with the consciousness of a new personal apprehension of the presence of God.

It was at the close of a Sunday morning service about a month later that an eager man stood before Mark Snyder.

"Why, Gray," cried the minister, "I'm more than glad to see you."

The other man was looking upon him with shining eyes.

"You brought the thing I'm wanting into

MARK SNYDER INHERITS

the pulpit to-day," he said, "and it's going to help me find my way."

That same morning Martin Van Pelt and John Knowles walked away from the church together.

"I think I know what you meant about the minister," said Knowles, "and the thing you were wanting seems to have happened."

"Yes," replied Van Pelt reverently, "the fire from heaven has fallen upon the altar of Elijah."

They walked along and only the sound of their steps on the pavement was heard.

Then Dr. Van Pelt spoke again:

"Mark Snyder has so much that is good that I was afraid that he might never become dissatisfied. I was afraid he would never feel lonely and empty and alone. I was afraid he would never attain to the meekness which opens the door to the great victorious fights of the spirit. But my fears were groundless. He has entered the way of the meek." The old man's voice softened and trembled a little as he added, "And now he will inherit the earth."

XII

THE HATRED OF BILLY McKEE

BILLY McKEE did indeed hate Tommy Linton. He loved to hate him. The hating had gone on for a long time. And a good deal of it had been done by Tommy. As a matter of fact, both young men were good haters.

Billy had just passed his twenty-fifth birthday, and for the last ten years he had spent a certain amount of his time in some sort of hostile activity in relation to Tom Linton.

It was back in the high school that the two had first clashed. That old ball game was fresh in Billy's mind after all the years. He had been at the bat. Tom was playing at first base. Billy had managed to find the ball with his bat, and had dashed away, realizing that only speed could enable him to reach first. The shortstop got the ball from the ground and threw to Tom.

THE HATRED OF BILLY McKEE

Billy was sure that he reached the base before the arrival of the ball in the hands of Tommy Linton. Tommy declared that he did not. The umpire shared the opinion of Tommy. There was a fierce altercation. The ugly word was exchanged.

Then there was a fight which the school remembered for many days. Each lad was sturdy and each was fearless. So it came to pass that faces were bleeding and clothes were torn when the principal, with his lithe athletic figure, his clear, honest eyes, his brilliant mind, and his perpetual sense of fair play, appeared on the scene. The fight was soon over, and before the end of the day he had persuaded the boys to shake hands.

But for all that the fire only died down. It did not go out. Every year brought its new misunderstanding. Sometimes it was rivalry in scholarship. Sometimes it was rivalry in the attempt to monopolize the friendship of some gay and clever girl. And always there were the hot blood, the fierce word, and the deepening hostility.

It was unfortunate that both young men

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

were employed by the same firm after their school days were over. Here the current of events placed them once and again in positions where the old bitterness was deepened, the old misunderstandings became more acute.

Each was keen and alert in business. And when it was necessary for them to work together for the furthering of trade enterprises they played the game with surprising capacity for team-work. But there was never a lessening of the personal tension of dislike, and so the office came to take their armed and hostile cooperation as a matter of course.

Then came the day of Tommy Linton's big accident. He was caught in the elevator when it fell. And it seemed an almost unbelievable thing that he had escaped with his life. There were two bones broken, however, and there was the question of possible internal injuries.

By a strange twist of circumstances Billy McKee had been just at the elevator entrance when the accident occurred. He

THE HATRED OF BILLY McKEE

helped to carry the unconscious form of his colleague to an office on the first floor, and quickly summoned an ambulance.

He watched the face of Linton as the machine hurried toward the hospital. He was still unconscious, and there was a strange pathos about that hard, strong face so curiously still.

After making every possible arrangement Billy hurried back to his work. Before long he learned over the telephone of the broken bones. The surgeon spoke a few crisp but hopeful words, and then hung up the receiver.

Billy hurried off to catch a train. There was an important deal pending in a little town a few hundred miles away, and he was to represent the firm.

"You have fights in your sleep, sir," chuckled the porter the next morning, as he gave a final brush to Billy's overcoat.

"What did I do, George?" inquired Billy, a little sheepishly.

"Well, you sure did shout," said the porter, his white teeth gleaming against an

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

ebony background. "You seemed to be having a scrap on an elevator, as far as I could catch on. The man in the upper berth said he preferred people who snored."

Billy hurried out of the train, vaguely remembering hours of dim struggling with some strange giant who insisted on fighting him whenever he boarded the elevator in the big office building.

There was a trip of a few hours on an accommodation train through a stretch of charming country, and Billy found himself at his destination.

It was a day of quick and effective work. The deal was made and he was ready to return. Another guest at the little hotel who was driving through a town twenty miles away told of better connections for the big city to be secured by taking a train there.

Soon Billy was comfortably seated in the automobile of his new friend, and the machine was humming contentedly, as it left the miles of road behind it. Then half way to the town came a puncture, with the most tantalizing delay. After that, the machine

THE HATRED OF BILLY McKEE

speeded up, but even so when the station came into view the express for the city was just vanishing around a curve.

"Well, I'm afraid I didn't help you out much after all," said the owner of the automobile, looking regretfully at Billy.

"I'll take the wish for the deed, and thank you just as much," said McKee, heartily. He swung into the station, while the machine moved away. It was impossible to avoid a frown when he learned that it was three hours before the next train which would serve his purpose was scheduled to arrive.

It was a tiny station in a tiny town. There were practically no resources. In the excitement of the day before, Billy had not even put a book into his grip. He moved restlessly about the station.

He saw a copy of a morning paper. It was one he had already read before going out for the rendezvous in the country. He walked restlessly about the waiting room, and up and down the platform.

He kept thinking of Tommy Linton. He was always so irritatingly vital. How curi-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

ously lifeless he had seemed after the accident.

Billy reentered the little waiting room. There was a shelf in a corner. A book lay upon it. With some eagerness Billy picked it up. Here might be a refuge from dullness in the next couple of hours. With a little gesture of something not unlike distaste he started to put it back upon the shelf. It was a copy of the King James Version of the English Bible.

Then he hesitated. After all, why not? It was a long, long time since he had read anything in the Bible. It might offer possibilities. At any rate there was nothing else.

He sat down in a corner of the room and flung his grip and his top coat beside him. Then he opened the book.

Oddly enough the pages parted at Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount and the first words which met his gaze were these: "Love your enemies." A half-irritated, half-whimsical smile crossed Billy's face. "I'm getting mine, right from the start," he said.

THE HATRED OF BILLY McKEE

Nevertheless he kept on reading. He became possessed of a sudden desire to sense the quality of this personality who had so set himself against hatred. He turned to the beginning of the Gospel, and began to read.

It was almost a new story to him. His boyhood home had been a place careless of these things, and he had spent most of his Sundays in some sort of athletic activity since he had been a very young lad. So the story unrolled with the charm of the unfamiliar.

Time passed rapidly. Once and a while Billy whistled to himself. Sometimes he muttered: "Good for him. I didn't really know he was like that."

His lips tightened, and he sat a little straighter as he began to approach the last tragedy. As the clouds darkened around the central figure of the story the clouds gathered on Bill's face.

"The brutes!" he cried as the multitude came upon Jesus in the quiet of Gethsemane. And when he read of the kiss of Judas his

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

face paled as if he had never heard that story before. With a subtle awareness which filled him with a vague surprise he lived over again the whole scene as the words of the Gospel pictured it.

After he had completed the whole narrative, he sat very still for a while, fingering the book he held. Then he began turning the pages again, this time dwelling here and there upon a paragraph in Luke's Gospel. He came to a sharp halt at some words in Luke's account of the crucifixion: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The little waiting room was very quiet. And Billy McKee looked far beyond its walls. The one Figure which has mastered the world had at last actually come within his ken. And beside the majesty of that high and self-forgetful spirit with its forgiving love his own petty anger suddenly stood in sharp antithesis.

Then another figure seemed a part of the silent drama. The unconscious face of Tommy Linton was clear before his eyes.

THE HATRED OF BILLY McKEE

And the three of them, the strong and lonely Master of men, and the sufferer in the hospital a few hundred miles away, and the busy business man caught for three hours in an out-of-the-way railway station seemed to have something to settle.

Billy sat plunged in the deepest thought. A sharp whistle and a rumble of wheels brought him to quick attention. Hastily he picked up his grip and his coat and scrambled aboard the train.

A moment later he gazed half wistfully at the little station swiftly disappearing from view. Then he said: "I'll do it. He knows the way and I reckon he'll show me how."

Still he looked out of the window as the train gained in momentum.

Then he spoke again with a note of wonder in his voice: "It's queer I had to come to this little corner of nowhere to find it all out."

That night the Pullman porter was not disturbed by any activities on the part of Billy McKee.

XIII

THE BATTLE OF SENTARO

"FORTY LOVE" called out Sentaro. Then he poised his lithe body, held his racquet firmly in his hand, gave the ball a little toss, and with a sharp and sudden and powerful movement of his arm sent it over the net so placed that with all its momentum it was quite impossible for Bert Lingate to return it.

"Game!" cried Sentaro.

"And set," responded Bert Lingate. "Six to five. Never mind, I'll do better to-morrow."

The two young men put on their sweaters and started off to the gymnasium pool for a dip. They were an arresting pair. Lingate was the taller of the two. His firmly built body gave you a sense of ready strength. And his sharply cut face with its shrewdly twinkling eyes gave you an immediate feeling of hearty good comradeship. Sentaro

THE BATTLE OF SENTARO

was slight in build but wonderfully well developed, with a grace and quickness which impressed the observer at once. The two had been great friends ever since those days a good many years ago now when they had played together as children in Tokyo. Bert Lingate's father was an able and effective missionary. And the father of Sentaro was a Christian of the second generation. The two young men had attended different colleges in America. But for nearly three years they had been on the same campus in graduate work. Each was to receive his Ph.D. at the approaching commencement of the university. Bert Lingate had majored in philosophy and Sentaro had majored in history. The theses were accepted and the strain of the oral examinations was over. So the last days before the commencement were easy going and restful enough.

There were many greetings and many bits of friendly chaff as they moved across the campus toward the gymnasium. And Sentaro seemed quite as much at home with it all as his friend. To tell the truth, he had a

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

singularly winning personality and it had been said in college that no Japanese student ever entered so much into the life of the school. His room was not the lonely and isolated abode of many an Oriental student. He spoke English with complete and expressive vigor and men liked to drop into his room for a chat.

The two graduate students came out of the gymnasium a few minutes after their entrance with the quick and zestful stride which health and exercise so surely give. They were carefully groomed and Sentaro carried himself with all the unconscious confidence of his companion.

Bert Lingate looked at his friend with a half humorous light in his eye.

"Well, old chap," he said, "I suppose in a few years you will be the head of the Japanese delegation at some center of diplomatic exchange. Will it be Washington?"

Sentaro looked suddenly serious.

"It's a longer road than you think," he said, "and it is a more difficult one. A good many things must happen and a good many

THE BATTLE OF SENTARO

things must be kept from happening before a man comes to his own in that sort of activity."

"Oh, don't be modest," said Lingate. "You have the friendship of the big men of the empire already, and with your technical scholarship and your command of modern languages you simply can't be passed by. I'm glad of it too. You have a mind as subtle as the Orient and as straight as—"

Bert paused in just a little confusion as to the direction in which his speech was carrying him.

But Sentaro interrupted with laughing good humor.

"As straight as the mind of the Occident ought to be but sometimes isn't," he said.

They walked along in silence for a little while under the fine old trees of the campus. At length Sentaro turned to Lingate looking right into his eyes in a curiously revealing fashion which sometimes almost startled his friends.

"Diplomacy ought to be worth something," he said. "But do you think we can

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

do it? What is going to become of all the fires of hate which are being kindled? Can we learn to live together in the same world?"

He had never spoken as frankly as this before and Bert Lingate looked at him appraisingly before he replied.

"You have been reading some red-hot propaganda," he said, accusingly. "You have been drinking anti-Japanese firewater and it's not good for you."

"Is it good for anybody?" Sentaro flashed back.

Once again they walked along without a word. This time it was Lingate who broke the silence.

"I'm sailing for Tokyo in August. That's my vote. I'm going to help to create the good will which is to save the world."

There was a light of deep affection in Sentaro's eyes.

"You'll do a good day's job of it," he said; and then he added, soberly, "And it is men like you who stand between us and the abyss."

"And we are completely helpless without

THE BATTLE OF SENTARO

men like you," replied Lingate as they parted for the day.

The light burned far into the night in a certain dormitory window. Early in the evening there had been callers with the usual hearty exchange of zestful talk. Then Sentaro had locked the door and taken out of his trunk a couple of books. One of them was Lathrop Stoddard's *Rising Tide of Color*. For an hour the young Japanese scholar read busily. He had finished reading the book that morning. Now he was going over it scrutinizing marked passages. He leaned back in his chair at last, his face hard and bitter. The whole picture was before him. He heard the call to arms as the white race was summoned to battle for its supremacy. All the race hatred and all the race pride seemed to have passed out of the book like a sword to pierce his sensitive spirit. He turned to the other book. It was by a popular novelist whose work was read by millions of people. He turned its pages rapidly. He marveled at the cold bitterness of its hatred of Japan. A Japanese was

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

treated like a poisonous serpent which ought to be slain as quickly as possible. He thought of the multitudes of uninformed people with undisciplined minds all over the English-speaking world who were reading that book and his face quivered with pain. Then his own face became stern and remorseless. If this was the challenge, Japan would prepare to meet it. Men of Japan knew how to live. They knew how to die. If they must fight this bitter proud white civilization, so be it.

The room was very still as Sentaro looked about hardly conscious of the tense rigidity of his muscles. He chanced to turn toward the small mirror which hung on the wall. He drew back before the scornful hatred on his own face. His eyes fell on another book which lay upon his desk. It was the Greek New Testament which he read easily at sight and which he had used daily ever since he had finished his liberal arts course. Almost mechanically he picked up the well-worn volume. It opened at the fifteenth chapter of Saint Luke. That series of picture para-

THE BATTLE OF SENTARO

bles of generous love for the lost somehow caught and held his mind. He read on and on. The very background of his fierce and terrible thoughts seemed to make the teachings and the life of Jesus stand out in sharper meaning. He came at last to the arrest, the legal procedure, and the crucifixion. Hate and love were meeting and love was being slain. He read with a strange, greedy appetite as if he were drinking the cup of gall with Jesus. He heard him say, "Father, forgive them." He heard Him say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He seized upon Jesus' belief that love reigned at the heart of the universe even when hate was triumphant here. He watched him die with a sort of painful eagerness. It was true then. Love had been strong enough to die for hate. It had endured to the end. It had risked everything and had refused to give back hate in return. And so, risking everything, it had won everything. It had created a new conscience in the world. And the greatest struggle to keep that conscience

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

alive was now to come. The thing for which Jesus died and the thing for which Judas betrayed him were to meet in conflict on all the seas and on all the lands of the world. Everywhere men were dimly becoming aware that the races must either destroy each other or else learn to live in peaceful co-operation in the same world. Men talked of it in the world's great capitals. They talked of it upon the decks of ships. Hatred and love were already in the lists. And the future of the world was at stake. Where would he, Sentaro, stand in the struggle? He looked at the books which seemed the very inspiration of race hatred. He looked again at his little Greek New Testament. Then there came a great and peaceful quiet into the room. In the presence of Calvary there was only one decision which he could make. He turned out his light. He knelt by his couch. He made no attempt to use words of his own in prayer that night. But kneeling in the stern and beautiful peace of a new commitment he repeated very slowly, "Father, forgive them." Then when it

THE BATTLE OF SENTARO

seemed that those words had come from the very heart of Christ into his own he pressed his face between his hands with deep and unutterable thoughts regarding the future. He knew what a bitter conflict must be waged with the ruthless militarists of his own land. He knew the remorseless exploitation of which they were capable. He knew what risks he must take in opposing them. And very simply and in deep trust he uttered the other words: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

In a few moments Sentaro was sleeping quietly. The big clock in the university tower rang out the hour. The bright rays of the moon crept through the window and fell upon the face of an alien sleeping among a foreign people. Perhaps he was dreaming of a far-off city in the sunrise land. Whatever his sleeping thoughts, his face was full of the gentle beauty of serenity and peace.

XIV

THE FIRE IN THE HEART OF THE BISHOP

THE Bishop was in splendid form that night. The big auditorium was packed with eager men and women coming from all over the area for which he was responsible. It was more than a rally. It was a council of war. The ministers were there from all the churches. The sharp-featured and keen-eyed business men sat beside them. The men of varied professions who had achieved leadership in their communities and in their churches were scattered through the audience. And numbers of women with clear eyes and resolute and thoughtful faces were all about. Then there was something more than the sense of a multitude of individuals about this great gathering. You had a feeling of a subtle spiritual unity about the whole group. One set of purposes, one com-

THE BISHOP'S HEART

mon interest—indeed, it is almost possible to say one common passion—united them all.

The Bishop was good to look upon. Tall and well formed and athletic of build, his figure had a certain easy way of dominating the place where he moved. He had the face of the patient, careful scholar, the eyes of a man of affairs, and some half-impalpable quality about his countenance which suggested intimate contact with the fathomless inspirations of the great world just beyond our ken. His career had been of that steady and slowly developing sort which expresses much stability if it is not lightened by any dramatic quality. The old theological professor who had loved him as a boy and still followed his activities with an almost tender pride was fond of describing the Bishop by means of the lines of Matthew Arnold: "He saw life steadily and he saw it whole."

On this particular evening it was evident that he also saw it passionately. He obtained an almost instant command of his audience. And soon he was in the midst of an acute and graphic analysis of the period

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

in which he and his hearers were living. He had an easy and assured command of his materials. All his wide reading and all his intimate contact with men and movements was brought to bear upon his diagnosis of the ills of the world. Then over against all this he put the energies of that message which he had found vital and adequate as he had applied it in all sorts of relations and in all sorts of situations and to all sorts of people. He had a way of investing any subject of which he spoke with new qualities of mastering interest, and as he talked of the supreme passion of his life, it seemed as if his very phrases became molten gold ready to take new and marvelous and permanent forms of beauty and power. You quite forgot the Bishop. It was his Master and Lord who stood before your mind and conscience and heart and in that presence you were awed and subdued and inspired. Life seemed to be telling you its secret in one splendid moment.

Then the Bishop turned to the practical tasks and the definite opportunities con-

THE BISHOP'S HEART

fronting the men and women who were before him. You felt the deep wonder of his consciousness of the renewing potency of the gospel in the individual life as he spoke. You felt the mighty heave of his social passion moving like the very resistless tides of the sea. And all this he related to the very concrete concerns of the individual church and the particular community and the individual Christian. Definite plans expressed the immediate application of those great inspirations with which he had been dealing. The concrete responsibilities of the men and women before him for the community, the commonwealth, the republic, and the vast encircling world were sharply defined with the clear enunciation of the next step in service and activity. Then once more there was a sudden glimpse of the meaning of the great and eternal resources of power which are at the disposal of the Christian, and then in the quiet of that vision the address came to an end.

Nobody applauded the Bishop. After one of his revealing utterances people were

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

likely to feel that applause was an impertinence. But as he walked down the aisle the oldest man in the Conference held his hand for a moment as he said: "I found the inspirations of my youth again to-night. The light of the sunrise has reached the evening hour."

The president of a great corporation looked into the Bishop's eyes as he said: "I'm playing with life. You are living. But you may be sure of one thing: I am going to invest in more of the securities you described to-night."

And one very young chap just out of theological school and now the minister of his first church stood for a moment by the Bishop quite speechless with a glory in his eyes which brought a quick choke to the older man's throat. The vision and the splendor had shone before all the people and they were going out to follow the gleam.

It was only a week later that the hour of terrible testing came. Afterward he remembered how on the night when he had poured out his very soul before his people

THE BISHOP'S HEART

one face had shone with a deeper response and a profounder understanding than any other. They had been rather quiet as they had driven home together. Then for a moment they had stood side by side on the piazza in the moonlight while the mellow glow lighted the face of his wife. She had spoken with a certain rich depth of satisfaction of the growing meaning of their life together. And as two young people oblivious to all the world in the first rapture of their discovery of each other had passed by in the beauty of that night in early spring the Bishop's wife had said with a laugh all full of mellow sympathy and understanding: "And those children think they know what love is!"

The Bishop was alone in the house when a sudden and sharp ringing of the bell gave him a vague sense of alarm. Then all too soon a very still form was brought into the house and he heard the few words which told of a swiftly moving automobile, a strange moment of confusion which came to his wife, and the sudden ending of the life more pre-

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

cious to him than any other life in all the world. The Bishop moved about very quietly. He gave the necessary orders. He seemed in perfect control of all his faculties and his friends marveled at the quiet, strong dignity of it all. Then at last the end of those first torturing responsibilities came and the night found him alone in a room every part of which seemed speaking of a presence and a voice to be there no more.

With a kind of dull, hard weariness the Bishop sat in a large chair by the table where they had so often sat together. And then he began to realize that something more than death had entered his home. There was a strange emptiness in his spirit. It seemed as if the pilot flame of his soul had gone out. And as he knelt by his bed his words seemed to fall heavily beside him. They had lost their wings.

The next few days had something like a blur about them. There was manifold kindness from devoted friends. There was a stately and noble service whose dignity and tenderness found their way through all the

THE BISHOP'S HEART

pain which seemed perpetually throbbing like the very life pulse of the Bishop's spirit. Then the pain continued. It was as if it hurt just to be alive.

When it was all over a lonely man sat in the study of the old house lighted with its mellow, softly shaded lamps, with such quantities of books looking down in mild and urbane friendliness from their shelves. The Bishop did not want to read to-night. He sat quite still. And again he had that strange feeling that the pilot flame had gone out in his soul. There was no fire in his heart. For an hour he allowed his mind to move about among his great memories. And out of them all arose a glowing picture of his wife. It was more complete than when she had been with him, for now everything seemed to fall into its proper place and he saw the whole wonderful portrait. The poignant pain of losing her seemed something fresh and new in the world. It was as if no one had ever before suffered the thing he was suffering. For a long time he sat very still with his memories and his grief.

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

At last he reached over for a little black-covered book upon the table and turned on the tiny intense light above it. He turned the pages quickly. Then he paused as he found what he was seeking. He would follow Jesus as he entered the way of bereavement and death. It was the story of Lazarus upon which he bent his eyes. And the story of the bitter grief of the two sisters. His imagination quickened as he read, and that old woe lived again in his mind and heart. It was his first moment of relief. For now it was another sorrow, and not his own, which had entered his mind. Then he watched the coming of the sisters. He saw Martha meet Jesus with her heart-break in her eyes as she greeted her friend. And he saw the face of Jesus torn by the woe which had devastated the home he loved. There was something amazing about that face. Not only the death of Lazarus but all death had set its imprint there. You felt as you looked upon it as if you could hear God weeping for the sorrow of the world. Very gently the Bishop moved his hand upon the little

THE BISHOP'S HEART

book. Already its healing ministry was beginning to do its work. For as he stood with Mary and Martha he knew that there is room in the heart of God for every human pang. And somehow he knew too that when you take your sorrow there it loses its terrible isolation. It makes friends with many other sorrows. And that is the beginning of peace. Then he read on until he came to some words of Jesus. They did not appear to be words at all. They were streams of life flowing into his own soul. He listened as the Master spoke: "I am the resurrection and the life." It was strange that he had never really known what that meant before. Now he knew. And his very inmost life seemed swept by a triumphant consciousness of the victory of the exhaustless love of God alive in the life of Jesus Christ. He saw his Master standing there deathless even though he was to be crucified. He said over softly to himself the word "deathless." And as he spoke there was another figure with the Master in his thought. It was not the figure of Martha. It was the figure of the one he

THE INEVITABLE BOOK

knew best and knew the most deeply. Very quietly and simply he knew that all was well. And again he whispered the word, "deathless." Then he said again very slowly, "I am the resurrection and the life." He closed the little book. And in that very moment he became conscious that the strange, inner emptiness was gone. The sorrow remained. But now the fire was burning in his heart. And in that inner light even his pain was transfigured. He went quite quietly to bed. As his head rested upon the pillow he did not feel alone.

When Sunday morning came the Bishop insisted upon preaching. And those who looked upon his face marveled at the light which they saw there. And those who listened to his words marveled because they were tipped with flame.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

